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## INTRODUCTION

Contemporary societies experience a widespread crisis of trust. Political, economic, scientific, educational and religious institutions are increasingly affected by it. The protests against the vaccination for Covid-19, the abstention on the occasion of general and local elections, the increasingly widespread questioning of the opinion of the experts, the growing fortune of the various conspiracy theories, the polarization in the Church and in society, are just some symptoms of a transversal and radical crisis, potentially capable of undermining the very foundations of civil coexistence. Individual and collective existences are based, in fact, on trust.

The Call for papers will deal with questions like the following: What is trust? What does it mean to trust somebody at a personal or social level? How to rebuild educational trust?

This topic has particular interest for Catholic education and the many educational institutions related to the Christian message. The Global Compact on Education called for by Pope Francis is an invitation to all researchers in Catholic education to a determined commitment. ACISE wishes to engage for three years in a research project on the educational and anthropological foundations of the global compact on education, in active collaboration with Organizations of Catholic educators, teachers and students and with all researchers in Catholic education within IFCU.

Joaquim Azevedo

## LA CONFIANCE EN EDUCATION. QUELQUES ÉLÉMENTS D'ANALYSE ET DE COMPREHENSION A LA LUMIERE DE LA PENSEE DE KAROL WOJTYLA

Bertrand Senez \*

**Abstract** The aim of this article is to explore how the thought of the philosopher Karol Wojtyla, who became John Paul II after his election to the pontificate in 1978, sheds light on the role and foundation of trust in education. Although the philosopher-pope did not devote a dedicated study to the theme of trust in education, his rich and varied work contains many elements that provide a deeper understanding. Recognition of the being of the person being educated is the basis of a trust that can be described as ontological, and which is capable of underpinning the personalistic norm of education. This can be shared in a community of educators united by a personalist culture, which facilitates the unconditional renewal of hope that is so necessary in education. Through the mediation of the body and sensibility, the trust granted by the educator is manifested to others. It enables the person being educated to gain confidence in his or her own worth. But to be worthy of trust, the educator has to educate himself, which means integrating his psychosomatic resources into the act of educating. Finally, the role of education for participation is emphasized to facilitate a confident commitment to the existence of the individual and the gift of self in a human community.

**Keywords** Trust, trust-based relationships, personalism, commitment, participation, education.

**Résumé** Cet article vise à explorer comment la pensée du philosophe Karol Wojtyla, devenu Jean Paul II après son élection au pontificat en 1978, permet d'éclairer le rôle et le fondement de la confiance en éducation. Si le philosophe-pape n'a pas consacré d'étude dédiée à ce thème de la confiance en éducation, il n'en reste pas moins que son œuvre riche et variée comprend de nombreux éléments qui permettent d'approfondir sa compréhension. La reconnaissance de l'être de la personne éduquée fonde une confiance qui peut être qualifiée d'ontologique et qui est à même de fonder la norme personaliste de l'éducation. Celle-ci peut être partagée dans une communauté d'éducateurs unis alors par une culture personaliste, ce qui facilite le renouvellement inconditionnel de l'espérance si nécessaire en éducation. Par la médiation du corps et de la sensibilité, la confiance accordée par l'éducateur se manifeste à autrui. Elle permet à la personne

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éduquée de prendre confiance en sa propre valeur. Mais pour être digne de confiance, l'éducateur doit s'auto-éduquer, ce qui passe par l'intégration de ses ressources psychosomatiques dans l'acte d'éduquer. Enfin, le rôle de l'éducation à la participation est mis en avant pour faciliter l'engagement confiant dans l'existence de la personne et le don d'elle-même dans une communauté humaine.

**Mots clés** Confiance, relation de confiance, personnalisme, engagement, participation, éducation.

## **Introduction**

Cet article vise à explorer comment la pensée du philosophe Karol Wojtyła, devenu Jean Paul II après son élection au pontificat en 1978, permet d'éclairer le rôle et le fondement de la confiance en éducation. Si le philosophe-pape n'a pas consacré d'étude dédiée à ce thème de la confiance en éducation, il n'en reste pas moins que son œuvre riche et variée comprend de nombreux éléments qui permettent d'approfondir sa compréhension.

Cette introduction cherche à inscrire la présente contribution dans le droit fil du précédent numéro d'Educa (2023), à faire ainsi écho à la première session du projet de recherches de trois ans proposé par l'ACISE sur les fondements éducatifs et anthropologiques de la confiance et à étoffer la réflexion sur le thème de la deuxième année (« Inspiring trust ») déjà présentée dans le cadre du 23<sup>ème</sup> colloque international qui a eu lieu à Lublin en avril 2024. Après avoir situé dans cette introduction l'importance et l'enjeu de la confiance en éducation et après avoir repris quelques résultats du précédent numéro de la revue, il sera proposé dans la suite de l'article de poursuivre la réflexion à partir des textes de Karol Wojtyła et de Jean Paul II, et de montrer comment plusieurs concepts-clés de sa pensée permettent d'aborder de façon féconde le thème de la confiance en éducation.

L'amour peut être compris comme le fondement de l'éducation, surtout si l'on considère qu'aimer est vouloir le bien de l'autre, ce que Karol Wojtyła appelle « l'amour de bienveillance » (Wojtyła, 1978, p. 75). Plus encore l'amour inconditionnel indique qu'indépendamment de critères de réussite et de succès, « il est bon que tu existes » comme le formule de façon frappante Josef Pieper (2010, p. 56). L'enfant qui se sait aimé, sait qu'il aimable et que son être même est un bien. L'amour des parents, de la famille, des amis lui révèle la bonté de sa propre existence ; vivre est un bien. L'amour révèle d'une certaine façon à l'aimé que l'être et le bien sont convertibles.

Si l'amour de bienveillance est, pour l'éducateur, un prérequis, et pour celui qui est éduqué, sinon une garantie, au moins une cause dispositive à la conscience de sa propre vie comme un bien et conséquemment au consentement à la vie reçue, il n'en reste pas moins qu'il ne paraît pas suffire pour susciter l'engagement effectif dans l'existence. Il nous semble que la confiance accordée suscite de surcroît chez la personne éduquée une conscience de ses propres ressources, ce qui peut le rendre

capable de tenir un engagement. C'est en ce sens que l'on peut comprendre le texte du philosophe français Alain (1952) :

Je puis vouloir une éclipse, ou simplement un beau soleil qui sèche le grain, au lieu de cette tempête grondeuse et pleureuse ; je puis, à force de vouloir, espérer et croire enfin que les choses iront comme je veux ; mais elles vont leur train. D'où je vois bien que ma prière est d'un nigaud. Mais quand il s'agit de mes frères les hommes, ou de mes sœurs les femmes, tout change (...). Si je crois que l'enfant que j'instruis est incapable d'apprendre, cette croyance écrite dans mes regards et dans mes discours le rendra stupide ; au contraire, ma confiance et mon attente sont comme un soleil qui mûrira les fleurs et les fruits du petit bonhomme (...). La défiance a fait plus d'un voleur ; une demi-confiance est comme une injure ; mais si je savais la donner toute, qui donc me tromperait ? Il faut donner d'abord. (pp. 226-228)

La totale confiance accordée apparaît ainsi comme le pari impératif de tout éducateur. Elle ne va pourtant pas de soi. L'éducateur peut discerner par exemple que confier une responsabilité trop lourde serait préjudiciable ; ou que fixer un objectif trop élevé serait écrasant et risquerait fort d'engendrer échec, sentiment d'avoir déçu, autodénigrement et finalement perte de confiance en soi. Par ailleurs, l'éducateur est souvent en situation de discerner s'il convient ou non d'accorder sa confiance : cet élève qui s'explique à propos d'un vol commis me ment-il ? Dois-je le punir même s'il se dit innocent ? Bref, dois-je lui faire confiance, apporter crédit à son propos ? Il nous semble que la confiance inconditionnelle préconisée par Alain ne porte pas sur l'espoir d'atteindre un objectif, et n'est pas non plus incompatible avec un discernement des situations et des personnes. Mais sur quoi repose alors la confiance ? Qu'est-ce qui pourrait justifier qu'il faudrait apprendre à « la donner toute » ? Avant de répondre à ces questions avec Karol Wojtyła, reprenons même rapidement quelques réflexions stimulantes du précédent numéro de la revue.

Le professeur Calogero Caltagirone entend la confiance comme une notion « existentielle anthropologique primaire » (Caltagirone, 2023, p. 48). L'être et les actions de l'homme sont comprises comme étant structurées par la confiance. « En faisant confiance, l'homme dit un oui fondamental à la vie et aux relations qui l'établissent et le constituent ; il s'ouvre à lui-même, aux autres, aux choses du monde et à l'Au-delà/Autre » (p. 49). Bien sûr, l'homme peut être trahi et ne plus être enclin à accorder sa confiance. Mais précisément, la confiance reçue et donnée apparaît comme le prérequis nécessaire à l'éducation, à la vie sociale et à l'engagement dans l'existence. « La confiance signale que l'accès au sens/à la vérité de l'homme n'est pas donné exclusivement sous la forme d'une argumentation contractuelle, mais sous la forme d'un consensus sur ce qui est montré comme étant vrai, bon et beau, à estimer, à aimer et à pratiquer » (p. 54). Elle structure l'existence même de l'homme et son développement. Il faut faire confiance pour avancer dans la vie, car la confiance est le sous-bassement de la relation aux autres et au monde. Ainsi Tognon (2023) peut-il à juste titre affirmer : « la confiance intersubjective, la poignée de main, le sourire, la reconnaissance subjective sont fondées sur une confiance plus profonde dans la consistance et la significativité du fait qu'il y a quelque chose dans le monde plutôt que le néant. La confiance dans

le contenu originel de la confiance est, pour ainsi dire, le moteur immobile de l'expérience humaine » ( p. 43).

Une première réponse à la question « sur quoi repose la confiance ? » peut être ainsi : « parce qu'elle conditionne la vie bonne ; on ne peut pas en faire l'économie ». Nous souhaitons non pas remettre en cause cette affirmation qui nous semble tellement importante existentiellement, mais la compléter en interrogeant le fondement et les conditions morales de possibilité de la confiance, principalement à la lumière de la pensée de Karol Wojtyła devenu Jean Paul II<sup>1</sup>. Sur quoi repose donc la confiance ?

La réponse à cette question de prime abord théorique comporte un enjeu pratique crucial. L'éducateur doit « donner d'abord », surtout quand il est devant de jeunes personnes blessées, afin de leur permettre de sortir du cercle vicieux et délétère de la méfiance, et d'initier un apprentissage de la confiance en la vie. La confiance accordée par l'éducateur met la personne dont il s'occupe en mesure de croire en ses propres ressources vitales. Est-ce ainsi seulement un pari risqué mais nécessaire, ou y a-t-il des raisons qui peuvent fonder l'attitude de l'éducateur ?

### **La confiance en la raison comme préalable à la confiance accordée par l'éducateur**

La première piste proposée consiste à explorer le rôle de la raison. Car si la confiance comporte indéniablement une dimension affective, il n'en reste pas moins que le sujet juge à un moment donné qu'il est raisonnable d'accorder sa confiance, ou qu'il y a des raisons de faire confiance. La raison est donc au cœur de la décision libre d'accorder ou non la confiance. Nous souhaitons ici souligner que la confiance en la vie et en la relation avec l'autre passe aussi par une confiance en la raison. En effet, tout acte de jugement, tout discernement, oriente le sujet à décider ceci plutôt que cela et se fie donc à sa raison pour engager sa liberté. Mais sur quoi repose cette confiance en la raison ?

Le problème est ici que la raison semble juge et partie, car qui peut juger de la fiabilité de la raison sinon la raison elle-même ? Même le sceptique qui doute de tout, ne doute pas de sa raison, puisque c'est par elle qu'il juge que rien n'est fiable. Il juge que ses jugements ne sont pas fiables et garde donc confiance en sa capacité de juger. S'il suspend son jugement, c'est donc qu'il a confiance en sa raison. Si par soucis de cohérence, il cesse tout engagement, c'est qu'il honore indirectement la raison. Bref, la confiance en la raison s'impose dans l'exercice même de la raison. Cela pourrait constituer semble-t-il la source du plus grand arbitraire, puisque la puissance de la raison ne serait mesurée que par elle-même. Mais ce qui apparaît ici comme une objection radicale, c'est-à-dire,

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<sup>1</sup> Il a été ici postulé une continuité de sa pensée philosophique. Même si celle-ci s'expose avant son pontificat dans deux principales publications (*Personne et acte* et *Amour et responsabilité*), il n'en reste pas moins qu'elle continue de se développer par la suite.



selon l'étymologie, comme une objection qui touche à la racine du bon usage de la raison, perd de sa force quand on considère que la raison n'est pas close sur elle-même, mais qu'elle est ouverte au contraire au mystère des êtres<sup>2</sup> et qu'elle est ainsi mesurée par l'être qu'elle vise. Jean Paul II, à la suite de saint Thomas d'Aquin, et conformément à une perspective épistémologique réaliste, considère de même que la raison, dans sa structure et sa finalité mêmes, est relation à l'être, que cet être soit une réalité qui existe par soi (comme la substance aristotélicienne), un être de raison, ou une opération psychique. Plus même que le principe fondamental de l'intentionnalité husserlienne (« toute conscience est conscience de quelque chose »), la raison est ainsi comprise fondamentalement comme une puissance de connaissance extatique qui cherche à faire naître en elle-même l'intelligibilité du réel. Il s'agit ici de reconnaître sa vocation contemplative que Jean Paul II a notamment soulignée dans *Fides et ratio* et qui s'inscrit dans une longue tradition philosophique et théologique<sup>3</sup>.

Il nous semble que cela fonde le regard bienveillant de l'éducateur qui voit dans son élève au-delà de ses compétences, de ses qualités, ou même de ses manquements et de ses fautes, le mystère de la personne toujours digne. L'éducateur peut porter un regard simple sur la vérité de la personne qu'il a la charge d'éduquer, et ce de façon constante, car éduquer est un œuvre de longue haleine. Dans cette perspective, « une demi-confiance est comme une injure », car ce serait ne pas reconnaître la dignité intrinsèque de la personne éduquée ; il n'y a pas de plus ou de moins du point de vue de l'être même de la personne, même si celle-ci peut être plus ou moins droite, dépravée ou développée. Cela constitue la « norme personaliste » de la relation éducative, pour reprendre une formulation de Karol Wojtyła (1978, p. 32). La confiance peut ici être qualifiée d'ontologique, et si l'on en croit toujours Alain, en la donnant « toute », personne ne serait trompé. La confiance ontologique, fondée sur une certaine acception de la raison, apparaît ainsi comme la condition pour pouvoir accorder sa confiance mais aussi pour susciter la relation de confiance, et finalement inspirer confiance.

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<sup>2</sup> Qu'il nous soit permis ici de faire référence à un article ancien intitulé *La confiance en la raison*: « Pourquoi y a-t-il au cœur même de la raison une tension vers l'être et une accointance avec le monde ? Répondre à cette question nous introduit dans la dimension métaphysique de la raison. Celle-ci n'est pas seulement faite pour calculer et comparer. Elle est faite pour approfondir et contempler le mystère même des êtres, le mystère étant entendu ici non pas comme quelque chose d'incompréhensible en soi, mais comme quelque chose que l'on n'a jamais fini de comprendre. Il faut donc répondre avec enthousiasme à l'invitation qui transparait au cœur même de cette confiance primordiale. La raison est pleinement elle-même quand elle descend dans la profondeur du mystère » (Senez, 2007, p. 188).

<sup>3</sup> Dans la tradition carme par exemple, le Bienheureux Marie-Eugène de l'Enfant-Jésus donne une définition de la contemplation en se référant à celle, très sobre, de Saint Thomas d'Aquin comme « regard simple sur la vérité » et la complète grâce aux commentateurs carmes qui ajoutent « sous l'influence de l'amour » (1956, pp. 405-406).

### **La dimension collective de la confiance accordée**

Cet acte de confiance ontologique est celui d'un sujet, l'éducateur, qui par essence est individuel et singulier ; mais cela n'implique pas que cet acte soit posé dans la solitude et sans être en relation avec d'autres. Dans son encyclique *Fides et ratio* Jean Paul II développe déjà, au sujet de la simple connaissance, l'importance de la confiance. Nous recueillons avec confiance ce que d'autres nous transmettent et que nous ne découvrons pas par nous-mêmes :

Dans la vie d'un homme, les vérités simplement crues demeurent beaucoup plus nombreuses que celles qu'il acquiert par sa vérification personnelle. Qui, en effet, serait en mesure de soumettre à la critique les innombrables résultats des sciences sur lesquels se fonde la vie moderne ? Qui pourrait contrôler pour son compte le flux des informations qui jour après jour parviennent de toutes les parties du monde et que l'on tient généralement pour vraies ? Qui, enfin, pourrait parcourir les chemins d'expérience et de pensée par lesquels se sont accumulés les trésors de sagesse et de religiosité de l'humanité ? L'homme, être qui cherche la vérité, est donc aussi celui qui vit de croyance. Dans son acte de croire, chacun se fie aux connaissances acquises par d'autres personnes. (Jean Paul II, 1998, paragr. 31-32)

La connaissance par croyance est sous le rapport de la science moins parfaite que celle acquise par raisonnement ; il est certes préférable de reprendre pour son compte le cheminement argumentatif qui part des hypothèses pour arriver à des conclusions qui s'imposent à la raison, plutôt que d'accepter une théorie parce qu'elle est approuvée communément par les spécialistes d'une discipline. Mais Jean Paul II ajoute que sous un autre rapport,

la croyance se révèle souvent humainement plus riche que la simple évidence, car elle inclut un rapport interpersonnel et met en jeu non seulement les capacités cognitives personnelles, mais encore la capacité plus radicale de se fier à d'autres personnes, et d'entrer dans un rapport plus stable et plus intime avec elles. (paragr. 32)

Il nous semble que ces analyses théoriques du rapport entre l'acte de connaissance et l'acte de croire apportent un éclairage très pertinent pour rendre compte de la pratique éducative, même si telle n'est pas l'intention du texte. En effet, éduquer s'inscrit le plus souvent dans une pratique collective : une famille, une école, une œuvre de jeunesse, etc. La confiance ontologique dont il a été question plus haut peut faire partie d'une culture commune de l'équipe éducative, ou même constituer un élément fondamental du charisme d'une institution. Cette culture, que l'on peut qualifier de personnaliste, porte chacun des membres de l'équipe éducative et lui rappelle, dans des moments de découragements, que cette confiance doit être renouvelée vaille que vaille. Or éduquer, fondamentalement, c'est espérer. Quand une équipe éducative se fonde sur cette même confiance ontologique, chacun de ses membres rappelle aux autres par son attitude et par les échanges à propos de leur mission commune, qu'espérer est le premier impératif. Accorder pratiquement et durablement sa confiance requiert ainsi le plus souvent le concours d'autres éducateurs : des pairs, une équipe éducative, ou tout simplement dans la famille, le conjoint. Cette dimension collective de la confiance, rendue possible par une commune culture personnaliste, permet à chaque éducateur

de soutenir dans le temps la confiance ontologique accordée parfois dans une grande obscurité. Elle permet de raviver la flamme de l'espérance qui donne la force de ne pas se laisser enfermer dans le passé, conformément à une vision déterministe, et de conjurer la fausse croyance en sa répétition perpétuelle. Dans l'espérance, l'avenir peut faire éclore une nouveauté imprévisible et pourtant attendue<sup>4</sup>.

### **Inspirer confiance par le témoignage de vie**

La suite de l'encyclique *Fides et ratio* peut aussi être interprétée dans une perspective éducative. La confiance n'est pas seulement une question théorique, mais instaure un rapport interpersonnel où l'authenticité des personnes est de mise.

Il est bon de souligner que les vérités recherchées dans cette relation interpersonnelle ne sont pas en premier lieu d'ordre factuel ou d'ordre philosophique. Ce qui est plutôt demandé, c'est la vérité même de la personne : ce qu'elle est et ce qu'elle exprime de son être profond. La perfection de l'homme, en effet, ne se trouve pas dans la seule acquisition de la connaissance abstraite de la vérité, mais elle consiste aussi dans un rapport vivant de donation et de fidélité envers l'autre. Dans cette fidélité qui sait se donner, l'homme trouve pleine certitude et pleine sécurité. En même temps, cependant, la connaissance par croyance, qui se fonde sur la confiance interpersonnelle, n'est pas sans référence à la vérité : en croyant, l'homme s'en remet à la vérité que l'autre lui manifeste (Jean Paul II, 1998, paragr. 32).

Tel est bien l'enjeu de l'action éducative. Inspirer la confiance passe par ce « rapport vivant de donation et de fidélité » de l'éducateur à l'égard de celui dont il se préoccupe et qui sent bien l'authenticité de l'engagement de son éducateur. Mais plus encore que la vérité d'une connaissance transmise, il s'agit ici de la vérité même de la personne qui est engagée dans la relation éducative. Jean Paul II fait le lien entre la vérité et le témoignage de vie, et c'est encore ici très inspirant pour comprendre ce qui se trame dans la relation éducative. De façon éminente le martyr témoigne par sa fidélité, au prix même de sa vie et malgré les souffrances, de l'attachement à son Dieu et de la vérité de l'existence.

Voilà pourquoi jusqu'à ce jour le témoignage des martyrs fascine, suscite l'approbation, rencontre l'écoute et est suivi. C'est la raison pour laquelle on se fie à leur parole ; on découvre en eux l'évidence d'un amour qui n'a pas besoin de longues argumentations pour être convaincant, du moment qu'il parle à chacun de ce que, au plus profond de lui-même, il perçoit déjà comme vrai et qu'il recherche depuis longtemps. En somme, le martyr suscite en nous une profonde confiance, parce qu'il dit ce

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<sup>4</sup> Gabriel Marcel, dans son *Esquisse d'une phénoménologie et d'une métaphysique de l'espérance*, repère bien cette force de l'espérance capable d'ouvrir un horizon nouveau : « en présence de l'épreuve particulière (...), je serai toujours exposé à la tentation de me refermer sur moi-même, et du même coup de refermer sur moi le temps, comme si l'avenir, drainé de sa substance et de son mystère, ne devait plus être que le lieu de la répétition pure, comme si on ne savait plus quelle mécanique déréglée devait y poursuivre sans trêve un fonctionnement auquel ne présiderait plus aucune intention animatrice : mais un avenir ainsi dévitalisé, n'étant plus un avenir ni pour moi ni pour personne, serait bien plutôt un néant d'avenir ». In *Homo Viator*, Présence de Gabriel Marcel, Paris, 1998, p. 76.

que nous sentons déjà et qu'il rend évident ce que nous voudrions nous aussi trouver la force d'exprimer. (paragr. 32)

C'est pourquoi le témoignage de vie de l'éducateur est crucial. Il indique une voie qui a été éprouvée et dans laquelle on peut s'engager avec confiance. D'autre part, l'éducateur incarne les biens qu'il poursuit sa vie durant et qui sont rendus ainsi désirables. La personne juge intuitivement de la bonté des fins poursuivies par ses éducateurs et peut alors naître chez elle le désir de les faire siennes. Comme le dit Bergson, à propos des hommes de bien, « ils ne demandent rien, et pourtant ils obtiennent. Ils n'ont pas besoin d'exhorter ; ils n'ont qu'à exister ; leur existence est un appel » (Bergson, 2008, p. 30). Inspirer la confiance passe par l'incarnation des biens attestés par la vie même de l'éducateur. Cette vie constitue comme un appel à poursuivre ces mêmes biens, sans même d'ailleurs que l'éducateur en ait toujours conscience.

### **La manifestation de la confiance accordée**

Karol Wojtyła, propose aussi dans *Amour et responsabilité* des analyses précieuses pour comprendre comment peut naître, dans l'intériorité des personnes, le sentiment de confiance. En évoquant jusqu'à présent une confiance que nous avons qualifiée d'ontologique, nous avons mis en valeur le rôle de la raison, dans sa dimension contemplative, raison qui saisit la dignité et la beauté inaliénable de la personne quels que puissent être par ailleurs ses manquements. Mais inspirer la confiance passe souvent par la médiation affective, particulièrement chez de jeunes personnes. Si la raison n'est pas forcément étrangère à l'affectivité, il reste que, phénoménologiquement, le rôle de la sensibilité, de l'émotivité, et de l'affectivité est essentiel pour inspirer la confiance. Karol Wojtyła (1978) n'évoque pas le rôle de l'affectivité dans l'éducation, mais les analyses qu'il déploie pour explorer l'amour, y compris dans sa dimension sexuelle, sont ici utiles. Le futur pape polonais distingue tout d'abord la perception et l'émotion. La perception est « la réaction des sens aux excitations produites par des objets » (p. 92), réaction qui sollicite aussi les sens internes. Le contenu de la perception diffère de celle de l'émotion car dans cette dernière nous réagissons aux valeurs de l'objet. L'émotion est certes sensorielle, « mais les valeurs qui le provoquent peuvent néanmoins ne pas être matérielles. On sait que les émotions sont bien souvent provoquées par des valeurs non-matérielles, spirituelles » (p. 93) même si elles ont un support matériel. Or, poursuit Wojtyła, « l'émotion est superficielle quand elle a pour objet des valeurs matérielles. Lorsque, au contraire, son objet est constitué de valeurs supra-matérielles, spirituelles, elle touche plus profondément le psychisme de l'homme » (p. 93). La confiance inspirée par l'éducateur passe par de multiples aspects sensibles comme l'attitude du corps, un regard, un sourire, etc. Mais à ces aspects sensibles sont indéniablement liés des valeurs qui sont immédiatement perçues par autrui : valeurs de bonté, de force, de détermination, de douceur, de sagesse, etc. Ces valeurs manifestées et reconnues inspirent la relation de confiance. La bonté des valeurs reconnues comme telles incite à accorder sa confiance. Il ne s'agit pas ici d'une délibération rationnelle, mais d'une intuition, qui incline le sujet à faire confiance. Plus précisément, l'authenticité du témoignage de la personne de

l'éducateur, telle qu'elle se manifeste par la sensibilité et l'émotivité dans l'intériorité du jeune, inspire la confiance.

Bref, si le fondement ontologique de la confiance, qui constitue d'ailleurs la « norme personaliste » de l'éducation est essentielle, il n'en reste pas moins que, phénoménologiquement, la relation de confiance est inspirée par la médiation du corps et de la sensibilité. Comme le dit encore Tognon (Tognon, 2023, p. 41) « la phénoménologie nous aide à étudier le *comment* de la confiance, sa manifestation concrète dans l'expérience humaine à partir des actes de perception ». Il nous semble que la double inspiration chez Karol Wojtyła de la pensée thomassienne et de la phénoménologie permet de rendre compte de dimensions essentielles de la confiance, des points de vue de son fondement et de sa manifestation.

### **Être digne de confiance: transcendance et intégration de la personne dans l'acte éducatif**

Il convient d'ajouter que l'éducateur qui inspire la confiance ne peut le faire de façon authentique que s'il s'est éduqué lui-même. Jean Paul II (1994), notamment dans sa *Lettre aux familles*, repère que l'éducation doit mener à ce que la personne puisse prendre le relai pour elle-même : « Le parcours éducatif mène jusqu'à la phase de l'auto-éducation à laquelle on parvient lorsque, grâce à un niveau convenable de maturité psychique et physique, l'homme commence à "s'éduquer lui-même" » (paragr. 16). On peut continuer le processus en affirmant que pour éduquer une autre personne, il faut pouvoir s'auto-éduquer. Il n'y a pas en réalité de véritable éducation sans auto-éducation. Jean Paul II insiste sur l'apprentissage que requiert la liberté et les analyses qu'il a développées, avant son pontificat, dans *Personne et Acte*, explicite ce que cela suppose. Quand elle agit, la personne se découvre comme un « Je » propre et à travers ce « Je » propre ; elle se révèle à elle-même à travers son acte, même si elle ne peut être réduite à son acte. C'est là un moyen d'accès privilégié à elle-même. La personne s'aperçoit de sa transcendance dans l'acte posé et a en même temps accès à elle-même par cet acte. Cela fonde d'ailleurs sa responsabilité en général et vis-à-vis de la personne éduquée en particulier. La personne, comme sujet, est capable de se déterminer par elle-même. Cette auto-détermination de la personne s'enracine dans la volonté qui elle-même se détermine en fonction de la vérité du bien qu'elle perçoit. Là est le principe de l'accomplissement de la personne comme personne, c'est-à-dire comme sujet dont les potentialités se développent par les actes posés. Karol Wojtyła insiste sur le rapport à la vérité du bien qui seule peut engendrer l'accomplissement réel de la personne. L'immanence du vécu subjectif ne suffit pas à fonder son accomplissement. L'auto-détermination de la personne dans son acte est source de son accomplissement à condition que l'acte lui-même soit évalué en conscience dans son rapport à la vérité.

Par ailleurs, « l'intuition fondamentale de la transcendance de la personne dans l'acte (...) permet en même temps de percevoir le moment de l'intégration de la personne dans l'acte. L'intégration, en effet, est une condition essentielle de la transcendance, dans l'ensemble structurel de la

complexité psychosomatique du sujet humain » (Wojtyla, 1983, p. 38). La personne est complexe et saisit bien qu'elle n'est pas un sujet purement volontaire. A l'expérience « j'agis » s'ajoute celle de « quelque chose se passe en moi ». La richesse de l'activité somatique et psychique est aussi constitutive de la vie du sujet personnel et l'effectivité de la transcendance de la personne dans son acte passe par sa capacité à intégrer cette richesse. Nous retrouvons ici, dans la personne de l'éducateur, les conditions personnelles et éthiques d'un témoignage authentique, qui rappelons-le, est la condition pour inspirer la confiance. Et le rapport essentiel de la conscience à la vérité fait que cette intégration psychosomatique n'est pas aisée et demande une auto-éducation. Cela s'apparente à l'acquisition de la vertu de chasteté dont il est question dans *Amour et responsabilité* et qui permet une relation ajustée à l'autre sans la volonté de l'utiliser.

Pour clore ces quelques réflexions menées à la lumière de quelques textes de Karol Wojtyla, il nous semble utile de réfléchir à un autre aspect du sujet. Nous avons jusqu'à présent exploré des pistes pour inspirer la confiance, et du point de vue de l'éducateur, être finalement digne de confiance. Mais comment inspirer la confiance, chez la personne éduquée, en son propre pouvoir d'agir ? Nous voudrions ici examiner une autre piste au travers du chapitre 7 de *Personne et acte*, qui esquisse une théorie de la participation. Il nous semble qu'il y a là un chemin pour éduquer à la confiance.

### **Eduquer à la confiance par la participation**

La participation désigne des actes qui sont accomplis « en commun avec d'autres », mais cela n'empêche nullement la dimension personaliste de l'agir. « Les actes que l'homme accomplit en tant que membres de diverses sociétés ou communautés sont encore des actes de la personne. Leur caractère social ou communautaire se trouve enraciné dans leur caractère personnel, et non l'inverse » (Wojtyla, 1983, p. 300). Plus même, « grâce à la participation, en agissant en commun avec d'autres, l'homme *conserve tout ce qui procède de la communauté d'action*, en même temps que – *et par là même justement* – il réalise la valeur *personaliste*<sup>5</sup> de son propre acte » (p. 306). Ceci est important, car en incitant une personne à participer, à agir donc en commun avec d'autres, la personne fait aussi l'expérience de la transcendance de sa personne et de son accomplissement dans une œuvre commune. Seulement, cela n'a rien d'automatique et là aussi une vigilance que l'on pourrait qualifier de personaliste s'impose :

La participation désigne alors la propriété de la personne elle-même, une propriété intérieure et homogène qui détermine le fait qu'en existant et en agissant "en commun avec d'autres" la personne existe et agit comme personne. La coopération, s'il lui manque l'élément de la participation, prive les actes de la personne de leur valeur "personaliste". L'expérience nous convainc de ce que "l'agir en commun avec d'autres" est également l'occasion de diverses limites imposées à l'autodétermination, et donc à la transcendance personnelle et à l'intégration de l'agir. Certes une telle limitation de la valeur personaliste est parfois poussée si loin qu'il est difficile de parler de

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<sup>5</sup> Souligné dans le texte.

l'agir "en commun avec d'autres" au sens d'acte authentique de la personne. L'agir (...) peut se transformer, en certaines circonstances, en "passio", en "advenir" qui, en un homme particulier, intervient sous l'influence d'autres. (p. 307)

Quand elle coopère la personne ne doit pas être absorbée par le collectif au point de ne pas participer, comme personne, à une œuvre commune. Ce serait une dérive totalitaire, ou sectaire. Autrement dit, l'éducateur doit veiller à ce que la personne éduquée puisse aussi se réaliser dans son engagement et agir comme sujet. Pour que le don de soi ne soit pas une dilution de soi, il convient que la personne puisse saisir que sa vocation humaine est dans le don conscient et volontaire de sa personne au service de ce qu'elle juge bon et vrai. En se découvrant capable de participer, elle est amenée à affirmer sa propre vocation et à se découvrir elle-même. Ainsi Jean Paul II (1994) fait-il référence au texte conciliaire de *Gaudium et Spes* qu'il a le plus cité au cours de son pontificat:

Quand il affirme que l'homme est l'unique créature sur terre voulue de Dieu pour elle-même, le Concile ajoute aussitôt qu'il « ne peut pleinement se trouver que par le don désintéressé de lui-même ». Cela pourrait sembler contradictoire, mais ce ne l'est nullement. C'est plutôt le grand et merveilleux paradoxe de l'existence humaine : une existence appelée à servir la vérité dans l'amour. L'amour amène l'homme à se réaliser par le don désintéressé de lui-même. (paragr. 11)

Une éducation au don désintéressé de soi est ainsi cruciale, et l'éducateur doit s'ingénier à ce que la personne qui lui est confiée ait des occasions de se donner et d'y goûter en même temps la joie de la vocation de sa personne, comme être de don. L'éducateur fait œuvre de sourcier, car il tente aussi de découvrir et de faire découvrir par quel moyen la personne peut exprimer ses talents et les mettre au service de fins qui le dépassent. En suscitant l'engagement et le don de soi, il permet à celui qu'il éduque de pouvoir se donner en conscience et librement et ce faisant de découvrir sa vocation véritable.

## **Conclusion**

Ces quelques pages ont cherché à montrer que la pensée du philosophe Karol Wojtyla devenu Jean Paul II comprend des ressources capables d'appréhender la confiance en éducation, son fondement, sa manifestation et sa capacité à être suscitée chez la personne éduquée.

La reconnaissance de l'être de la personne éduquée fonde une confiance qui peut être qualifiée d'ontologique et qui suppose une confiance primordiale en la capacité de la raison à rejoindre et reconnaître l'être de la personne. Cette confiance ontologique est à même de fonder la norme personnaliste de l'éducation. Celle-ci peut être partagée dans une communauté d'éducateurs unis alors par une culture personnaliste, ce qui facilite le renouvellement inconditionnel de l'espérance si nécessaire en éducation. Par la médiation de son corps et de sa sensibilité, la confiance accordée par l'éducateur se manifeste à autrui. Elle permet à la personne éduquée de prendre confiance en

sa propre valeur et en ses propres ressources. Mais pour être digne de confiance, l'éducateur est devant une exigence éthique d'auto-éducation, ce qui passe par l'intégration de ses ressources psychosomatiques dans l'acte d'éduquer. Enfin, l'incitation à la participation de la personne éduquée est mise en avant pour faciliter l'engagement confiant dans l'existence et le don d'elle-même dans une communauté humaine.

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## LAW SCHOOLS WITHIN EUROPEAN UNIVERSITIES IN THE AGE OF SECULARIZATION AND GLOBALIZATION

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**Abstract** There are forty law schools at Catholic universities in twelve European countries. The article is a starting point for academic debate on what it means to be a Catholic law school in the 21st century in Europe. Firstly, it encompasses an overview of the link between mediaeval legal studies and modern law schools at Catholic universities, general requirements for Catholic universities and their law schools, faculty and students. Secondly, the analysis of the position of the Catholic law schools on the academic map of Europe is presented on the country basis, which allows to trace the impact of national context and historical background. Thirdly, the research is focused on analysis of mission, curriculum and position in global ranking, which gives an opportunity to identify some common trends: (1) law schools in Catholic universities are mostly modern and postmodern phenomena; (2) they gradually strengthen their teaching and research capacity; (3) law schools are more explicit about their Catholic mission in countries where the Catholic Church has been persecuted; (4) commitment to excellence, service-driven approach, respect for human dignity are common values. Finally, the conclusion was made that enhancing cooperation between Catholic law schools in Europe can become a strong impulse for the advancement of Catholic intellectual tradition in law in general and a point for growth for each law school in particular.

**Keywords** Catholic legal education, Catholic universities in Europe, European law schools, Catholic Education.

**Résumé** Il existe quarante facultés de droit dans des universités catholiques réparties dans douze pays européens. L'article est un point de départ pour un débat académique sur ce que signifie être une faculté de droit catholique au 21ème siècle en Europe. Premièrement, il offre un aperçu du lien entre les études juridiques médiévales et les facultés de droit modernes dans les universités catholiques, les exigences générales pour les universités catholiques et leurs facultés de droit, le corps professoral et les étudiants. Deuxièmement, l'analyse de la position des facultés de droit catholiques sur la carte académique européenne est présentée par pays, ce qui permet de retracer l'impact du contexte national et du contexte historique. Troisièmement, la recherche se concentre sur l'analyse de la mission, du programme d'études et de la position dans le classement mondial,

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ce qui permet d'identifier quelques tendances communes: (1) les facultés de droit dans les universités catholiques sont principalement des phénomènes modernes et postmodernes ; (2) elles renforcent progressivement leur capacité d'enseignement et de recherche; (3) les facultés de droit sont plus explicites sur leur mission catholique dans les pays où l'Église catholique a été persécutée; (4) l'engagement pour l'excellence, l'approche axée sur le service, le respect de la dignité humaine sont des valeurs communes. Enfin, la conclusion a été tirée que le renforcement de la coopération entre les facultés de droit catholiques en Europe peut devenir un élan fort pour l'avancement de la tradition intellectuelle catholique dans le droit en général et un point de croissance pour chaque faculté de droit en particulier.

**Mots clés** Enseignement juridique catholique, universités catholiques en Europe, écoles de droit européennes, enseignement catholique.

## I. Introduction

Universities as an educational phenomenon arose in Medieval Europe penetrated by the Christian spirit. First, they were corporations of either students or professors who have seen their mission in search for truth, which includes faith and reason in an attempt to create intellectual harmony. Legal studies have always been part of Mediaeval university projects. The interest in newly-discovered Roman law became the reason for the establishment of the first university. For professors and students of Mediaeval universities, to be Catholic was natural, and to be part of *Orbis Christiana* was seen as a privilege. In modern times, however, those old universities often were secularised.

However, the second half of the nineteenth century became a time of revival for Catholic education. Neothomist movement in theology and philosophy, strong characters of popes speaking about social issues like Pius IX and Leo XIII, cardinal Newman and Oxford circle – Catholic Church started a new wave of intellectual endeavours to defend and better explain faith but also to serve the modern world in many social areas. The foundation of Catholic universities by popes and bishops was part of this new movement.

Today, 40 law schools in Europe operate within Catholic universities. In the US, this number is 29<sup>1</sup>. Many of the first European law schools grew up in Catholic educational institutions, and the Catholic intellectual tradition shaped their approach and academic excellence. Moreover, the university itself is often referred to as an invention of the Catholic Church, along with international

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<sup>1</sup> Breen, J. M., & Strang, L. J. (2011). *The Road Not Taken: Catholic Legal Education at the Middle of the Twentieth Century*. *The American Journal of Legal History*, 51(4), pp. 553–637. Available at: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41345435>, p. 553.

law, some legal principles, and much else. As Thomas Woods has said, Western civilisation owes far more to the Catholic Church than most people, Catholics included, often realise<sup>2</sup>.

In 11-12th centuries, when the first universities and their law schools appeared, the Catholic identity there was self-evident. It was a lens through which the law was interpreted as a phenomenon. Nowadays, the world is becoming globalised and more secular. According to the KOF Swiss Research Institute, since 1970th and 2017, the world globalisation index has almost doubled from 38,4 to 62,1<sup>3</sup>. Globalisation, in its turn, intensifies secularisation<sup>4</sup>. Today, in parts of Europe (mostly the North and the West), secularisation is sufficiently advanced to erode the place of religion in the private and public spheres<sup>5</sup>.

Many thoughts were given on law schools in Catholic universities in light of these tendencies in the US. The American landscape is deeply elaborated in the works of John M. Breen, Lee J. Strang, Gerard V. Bradley, Angela C. Carmella, William M. Treanor, Randy Lee, Nicholas P. Cafardi, Daniel J. Morrissey, and many others. However, it is difficult to find such research on European catholic universities and their law schools as a phenomenon.

Therefore, many questions arise. What does it mean to be a modern law school in a Catholic university in Europe? Is Catholic identity still there? If yes, what does it mean? What are the challenges law schools in Catholic Universities are facing, and what added value can they offer for new generations of lawyers in Europe? Answering these questions requires in-depth field research. In this article, we only begin to explore the surface layer by identifying a cohort of law schools in European Catholic universities and analysing their mission, curriculum, rankings, etc.

## **II. The very roots: how did Catholic law schools appear, and what did they bring?**

It is remarkable that the Catholic Church itself has reflected a lot on the connection between faith and reason. It can be traced back to early thinkers such as Augustine, who in the 4th century wrote about the faith that precedes reason<sup>6</sup>, and Thomas Aquinas, stating that reason is a “species-defining characteristic of human beings”<sup>7</sup>. In more modern surroundings, Pope John Paul II, in his

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<sup>2</sup> Woods, T. E., & Cañizares, A. (2005). *How the Catholic Church Built Western Civilization*. Regnery History, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Baysal Kurt, D., Sofuoğlu, E., & Alver, A. (2020). *A Turning Point In Globalization: The Validity Of Sloubalisation For The G-7 Countries*, p. 25.

<sup>4</sup> Halman, L., & Draulans, V. (2006). *How secular is Europe?*. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 57, p. 268.

<sup>5</sup> Davie, G. (Ed.), Leustean, L. N. (Ed.). *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Europe*, p. 50.

<sup>6</sup> Cushman, R. (1950) *'Faith and Reason in the Thought of St. Augustine'*, *Church History*. 1950;19(4), pp. 271–294. doi:10.2307/3161161, p. 271.

<sup>7</sup> Thomas Aquinas: Moral Philosophy (no date) Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Available at: <https://iep.utm.edu/thomasaquinas-moral-philosophy> (Accessed: 24 December 2023).

“Fides et Ratio”, wrote that “Faith and reason are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth”<sup>8</sup>.

Looking at the root cause, the 11th century was a fruitful time for commerce supported by the growth of the urban population in central and northern Italy. It was also the time of Justinian's *Corpus Juris Civilis* rediscovery (the 1070s), which attracted people from all around Europe to learn Roman law. However, foreign learners could not enjoy the same rights as locals and were subject to additional taxation and limitations on their rights. This also indicated a growing need to establish a student union to guarantee its members' justice<sup>9</sup>. Combining these factors led to the founding of the first *studium* – the University of Bologna. It was neither created by the Church nor the Emperor but was solely the students' home. From the beginning of studies, the canon law of the Catholic Church was closely linked to Roman law: as the Church institutionally lived by Roman law, it needed law professionals to maintain its legal affairs<sup>10</sup>.

In all first Catholic universities, following the Bologna type, from the moment of founding until the 13th century, Roman and canon law were one faculty with medicine and liberal arts. In Bologna type, since the 13th century, the university could be divided into two groups: *universitas legistarum* (law school) and *universitas artistarum et medicorum* (faculty of arts and medicine)<sup>11</sup>. As of 1338, the distribution of salaried professors in Bologna was the following: 27 in Roman law, 15 in the arts, 14 in medicine, and 12 in canon law, highlighting the dominant role of civil law in the first university established in Europe<sup>12</sup>.

In Europe, law was at the core of the first Catholic universities because of the need for educated rulers and lawyers. The law studies usually created a foundation for the university's further activities.

It is no surprise that all of the first European universities (11-14th century) could seem Catholic to some extent, as care of the soul was an essential part of the household regulations. Firstly, the person needed to be Christian to join the university, which meant being Catholic at the time.

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<sup>8</sup> John Paul II (1998) *Fides et Ratio* (14 September 1998) | John Paul II. Available at: [www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_14091998\\_fides-et-ratio.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091998_fides-et-ratio.html) (Accessed: 24 December 2023).

<sup>9</sup> Bazan, B. C. (1998). *The Original Idea Of The University*. In D. L. Jeffrey & D. Manganiello (Eds.), *Rethinking the Future of the University* (pp. 3–28). University of Ottawa Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1cn6t6p.4>, p. 9.

<sup>10</sup> Pihlajamäki, H. (no date). *Christianity and Criminal Law*. In J. Witte, Jr., & R. Domingo (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Christianity and Law*, Oxford Handbooks, p. 408.

<sup>11</sup> Rüegg, Walter. *History of the University in Europe: Volume 1*. Cambridge University Press, 1991, page 109.

<sup>12</sup> Clark, D. S. (1987). The medieval origins of modern legal education: Between church and State. *The American Journal of Comparative Law*, 35(4), p. 701. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.2307/840129>.

Secondly, as Rainer Christoph Schwinges writes: “Mass was celebrated daily, a sermon was delivered once a week, and, at least on all feast days, confession was to be made”<sup>13</sup>.

Since the Early Modern era, after the Peace of Westphalia, Europe started getting more secular, which has also led to the secularization of Catholic universities. In 1886, Paris University (Sorbonne), one of the first Catholic universities, became secular and later was divided into 13 public universities with a predominantly secular character<sup>14</sup>. The same happened to the La Sapienza University of Rome, which was founded by Pope Boniface VIII in 1303 and today is a secular public university.

Still, Catholic intellectual tradition greatly impacted the moral foundation of the law. For example, the idea of individual responsibility emerged as intertwined with the concept of sin<sup>15</sup>. The prohibition on double jeopardy also appeared first in Christianity: “God does not judge twice in the same matter” (Nahum 1:9); the exact origin applies to the presumption of innocence when God gives Adam a chance to respond to the charge concerning the illegal picking of the apple. Following the same pattern, the privilege against self-incrimination was also first stated by Gregory IX: “No person is to be compelled to accuse himself”<sup>16</sup>. The concept of “extraordinary crime” (*crimen extraordinarium*), punishment for the most severe crimes, even if not prescribed by law, also comes from the Catholic doctrine view that every sin shall be punished<sup>17</sup>. This concept was later crucial during the Nuremberg and Tokyo Military War Crimes Tribunals and later war incorporated into European human rights law<sup>18</sup>.

The list could go further, but it is essential that Christian values, as one of the fundamentals of Western civilisation, have deeply influenced law and its interpretation.

### III. General framework for legal education in Catholic universities

It is worth noting that the term “law school” has a broad meaning within this research. It does not necessarily mean law faculty or full-cycle education programs but instead means that a law degree is present within the university’s academic offer. The study focuses on law schools that are subdivisions of Catholic universities. There are no particular requirements for legal studies at

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<sup>13</sup> Rüegg, Walter. *History of the University in Europe: Volume 1*. Cambridge University Press, 1991, p. 228.

<sup>14</sup> University of Paris (no date) Visit the main page. Available at: [https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/University\\_of\\_Paris](https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/University_of_Paris) (Accessed: 24 December 2023).

<sup>15</sup> Pihlajamäki, Heikki, ‘*Christianity and Criminal Law*’, in John Witte, Jr., and Rafael Domingo (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Christianity and Law*, Oxford Handbooks, p. 409.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, p. 413.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, p. 410.

<sup>18</sup> See also Article 7 of the European Convention on Human Rights – No punishment without law

Catholic universities, so we will refer to the general notion of what it means to be a Catholic university.

The definition of a Catholic university is provided in the Code of Canon Law, which was introduced by the Vatican in 1983<sup>19</sup>. It defines what universities can hold the title of being Catholic, who can teach at such universities, and what is the role of local bishops in the field of Catholic higher education. Canon 808 states that only universities that have received the consent of competent ecclesiastical authority can hold the Catholic title. Sometimes, some parts of universities can be considered Catholic (oftentimes, the theology department), but the university itself may be secular.

In 1990, John Paul II issued an apostolic constitution, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, which provides that a Catholic university is (a) a community of scholars representing various branches of human knowledge and (b) an academic institution in which Catholicism is vitally present and operative<sup>20</sup>. In 2023, Cardinal José Tolentino Mendonça, a Prefect of the Dicastery for Culture and Education, elaborated on the modern understanding of the *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* norms in his speech “What the Church expects from Catholic Universities?”<sup>21</sup>. Here are the key points of the vision of how Catholic universities and all their units should operate:

1. Every university has to make its Catholic identity explicitly known. It can be done either in a mission statement or in some other appropriate public document.
2. Catholic Doctrine has to flow through the teaching, with no exception to the field of knowledge. The universities should focus on passing on the system of values based on the recognition of the dignity of each person, as well as the fundamental rights arising from that recognition.
3. Education should be combined with formation. Universities must train their students to be outstanding professionals ready to shoulder their society’s burdens through constructive dialogue.
4. Catholic Universities must have the courage to speak uncomfortable truths that do not please public opinion but are necessary to safeguard the authentic good of society.

#### **IV. Faculty at the law schools within Catholic universities**

Canon 810 §1 prescribes the duty of Catholic universities to ensure that teachers, besides their scientific and pedagogical qualifications, are outstanding in the integrity of doctrine and probity of life and that they are removed from their function when they lack these requirements. This requirement should be applied in conjunction with national regulation on employment and regional

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<sup>19</sup> Cafardi, N. P. (no date). *Catholic Law Schools and Ex Corde Ecclesiae, or What Makes a Law School Catholic*, p. 8.

<sup>20</sup> John Paul II. (1990). *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*. Cardinal Newman Society, para. 14.

<sup>21</sup> Cardinal Mendonça, J. T. (2023). 'What the Church expects from Catholic Universities'. Holy See: Prefect of the Dicastery for Culture and Education.

human rights standards. In Europe, they are posed by the Council of Europe and the European Union.

In the European Union landscape, there is a “religious ethos exemption” under the Equal Treatment Framework Directive. According to Article 4(1), member states may provide a different treatment based on the nature of the particular occupational activities concerned or of the context in which they are carried out.

Article 4(2) of the Directive provides that in the case of occupational activities within churches and other public or private organisations, the ethos of which is based on religion or belief, a difference of treatment based on a person's religion or belief shall not constitute discrimination if that is a (a) genuine, (b) legitimate and (c) justified occupational requirement, having regard to the organisation's ethos. The courts have a pool for defining the “genuine, legitimate and justified occupational requirement”.

For example, the European Court of Justice in the *IR v JQ* case (C-68/1) found that the dismissal of the Catholic doctor from a managerial position because of the violation of the canon family laws was discriminatory. The Court stated that “the notion of marriage advocated by the Catholic Church does not appear to be necessary for the promotion of IR's ethos due to the importance of the occupational activities carried out by JQ, namely the provision of medical advice and care in a hospital setting and the management of the internal medicine department which he headed. Therefore, that does not appear to be a genuine requirement of that occupational activity”. At the same time, it is interesting to see what position the court would take in the case of a university professor; is the religious component so important in their occupation that it would exempt them from the provision of Article 4 of the Directive? The question is open and awaits its own judgement within the European Union judiciary.

In the Council of Europe framework, the imposition of religious requirements is viewed from the perspective of the right to respect for private life (Article 8) or the right to freedom of conscience and religion (Article 9) under the European Convention on Human Rights.

The European Court of Human Rights in the *Fernández Martínez v. Spain* case ruled in favour of contract non-prolongation with the school Christianity teacher, whose opinions contradicted the Catholic Doctrine. The story concerns a secularised Catholic priest who stands for optional celibacy. From 1991 onwards, he taught Catholic religion and ethics in a State secondary school under an annual contract, which the Ministry of Education renewed based on the binding opinion of the diocese bishop. In 1996, Mr. Martínez took part in the “Movement for Optional Celibacy” of priests, where many other issues were raised, namely abortion, divorce, sexuality, and birth control. His participation in the movement appeared in the local newspaper, and therefore, his teaching

contract was not renewed. The diocese bishop reasoned it was a breach of duty to teach “without creating a risk of scandal”. The domestic court and the Constitutional Court of Spain stuck to the principle of neutrality and found the actions of the Church to be legal.

When reviewing the case, ECtHR<sup>22</sup> states that “the applicant had been aware of its rules and should therefore have expected that the publicity he had given to his membership in the movement for optional celibacy for priests would not be without consequence for his contract”<sup>23</sup>. In the end, the Court found no violation of Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, which guarantees respect for private and family life, home, and correspondence. Thus, the ECtHR has decided that the dismissal of Mr. Martínez was justified as he could reasonably expect the circumstances posed by his job.

One more case is the *Siebenhaar v. Germany*, delivered by the ECtHR. In 1997, a Catholic began working as a teacher in a daycare run by a Protestant parish. A year later, it became known that the applicant also joined the Universal Church (Brotherhood of Humanity) and started offering courses on its behalf. After the examination, the Protestant parish pronounced the dismissal of the applicant. The applicant tried to contest the decision within the domestic courts, but they dismissed the claim because the applicant “had breached her obligations of loyalty to the Protestant Church”<sup>24</sup>.

German national labour regulations on church employees in the area of the Evangelical Regional Church prescribe that the employee must be loyal to the Protestant Church<sup>25</sup>. It excludes membership in and collaboration with organizations whose principles, objectives, or practical activities contradict the Protestant Church's mission. It also grants the Church a right to terminate the employment relationship if the employee has seriously breached the duties of an ecclesial collaborator by his personal lifestyle or his professional behaviour and has thus seriously endangered the credibility of ecclesiastical service or if he withdraws from the Church.

The applicant complained, based on Article 9 of ECHR, that it violated her right to freedom of religion, but the ECtHR found no violation. The reasoning of the Court is that the national law provisions are reasonable, and the applicant “must have been aware when signing her employment contract”<sup>26</sup>.

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<sup>22</sup> ECtHR stands for European Court of Human Rights.

<sup>23</sup> European Court of Human Rights. *Fernández Martínez v. Spain*. 12 June 2014, para. 146.

<sup>24</sup> European Court of Human Rights. *Siebenhaar v. Germany*. 20 June 2011, para. 14.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*, para. 20.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*, para. 45.



On a national level, in the Netherlands, there have been disputes between the bishop conference and the Radboud University in terms of supervisory board appointments. In 2014, the board nominated a replacement, but the bishops rejected the candidate because she was not married in the Church. The board made another nomination, but the bishops rejected her as well because she was not a practising Catholic<sup>27</sup>. In 2019, after the rejection of all four nominations, the supervisory board of the university filed a case in the Enterprise Chamber, the highest court for corporate disputes in the Netherlands. The court ruled that the board can temporarily appoint its members without the bishops' approval.

Spain is also interesting in terms of hiring requirements. For example, Deusto University states to align itself with the Code of Conduct of the Society of Jesus in Spain<sup>28</sup>, while the CEU network, Catholic University of Ávila, Villanueva University, and the University of Navarra mention the Catholic affiliation and expect candidates to “align with the needs, identity, and mission, avoiding discrimination for reasons of any kind”.

The topic cannot be simplified to the represented case law. Still, it serves rather as a ground to state that there are multiple approaches that the courts take when it comes to employment at Catholic institutions, including law schools. Both the European Union and Council of Europe models acknowledge the right of religious-affiliated institutions to have additional requirements for the employees or applicants. In the European Union framework, it must have (a) genuine, (b) legitimate, and (c) justified occupational requirements with regard to the organization's ethos. The European Court of Human Rights emphasises the concept of loyalty and the expectations when joining the organization rather than the objective characteristics of job performance.

## **V. Students of the Catholic law schools**

There is no specific requirement from the Catholic Church for the students regarding their religious beliefs. Every student is free to practice their own religion but with considerable respect towards the Catholic affiliation of the university and its law school. In this term, the approach is rather liberal compared to other religious universities of Christian origin. For example, Brigham Young University, sponsored by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon Church), requires its students to maintain an Ecclesiastical Endorsement in its Honour Code. This endorsement is an affidavit stating that they are active participants in the LDS Church. This affidavit is essential to get admitted to university and must be renewed annually. Additionally, the

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<sup>27</sup> PillarCatholic (2023) *'Going Dutch? Bishops, university split over Catholic identity'*. Available at: <https://www.pillar-catholic.com/p/going-dutch-bishops-university-split-over-catholic-identity> (Accessed: 24 Dec. 2023)

<sup>28</sup> “Work at Deusto.” *Deusto*, [www.deusto.es/en/home/we-are-deusto/team/work-at-deusto](http://www.deusto.es/en/home/we-are-deusto/team/work-at-deusto). Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

Code of Honour requires students and staff to attend Church services, while also totally prohibiting same-sex relations<sup>29</sup>.

## VI. Law School in Europe: the common patterns

The list of Catholic law schools in Europe was composed using different sources: FUCE, Dicastery for Culture and Education in the Vatican, information provided by the local bishops, bishops' conferences, personal meetings with law school officials, and online research<sup>30</sup>. The countries are listed in geographical sequence, starting from Belgium as the home of the highest-ranking law school at a Catholic university in the world.

### *Belgium*

As Martin Conway has written, “Belgium has been a heartland of Catholic Europe during the twentieth century”. Such a role of the Catholic Church was possible because of the dominant position occupied in Belgian politics by the Catholic Party in the twentieth century<sup>31</sup>. When Belgium became independent in 1830, there was an alliance against the Dutch between two major groups (religious Catholics on the one side and completely secular liberals on the other side). When the two parties agreed to rule together, it led to the country being polarised either with secular or Catholic organizations. As a result, Catholic identity entered the common ground by creating Catholic banks, hospitals, shops, etc. In 2018, only 58% of the population identified as Catholics<sup>32</sup>. Still, Belgium is home to 3 Catholic law schools, which are the leaders in the world rankings.

The first two universities, KU Leuven and UCLouvain, are the successors of the Leuven University, founded in 1425. In the twentieth century, the original Leuven University was divided based on spoken language. KU Leuven remains Dutch-speaking, while UCLouvain speaks French. However, both still belong to the group of Catholic universities. The University of Namur was founded in 1831 as a Jesuit college and today is one of the biggest education providers in Wallonia.

KU Leuven is considered a leader of Catholic legal education in Europe, holding the 16th position in world law school ranking by the Times Higher Education<sup>33</sup>. He is followed by UCLouvain at 101-

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<sup>29</sup> Church Educational System Honor Code, [policy.byu.edu/view/church-educational-system-honor-code](http://policy.byu.edu/view/church-educational-system-honor-code). Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

<sup>30</sup> It is important to note that as the information about Catholic law schools in Europe had to be found from the ground with a limited presence on sight, the list of Catholic law schools may be incomplete. However, thanks to the various sources, it is expected to be close to the objective (if not the objective) in the academic year of 2023-2024.

<sup>31</sup> Vicent, M. (1996) *Political Catholicism in Europe, 1918-1965*. Clarendon Press, p. 187.

<sup>32</sup> “Belgium - United States Department of State.” *U.S. Department of State*, U.S. Department of State, 7 Dec. 2023, [www.state.gov/reports/2022-report-on-international-religious-freedom/belgium/](http://www.state.gov/reports/2022-report-on-international-religious-freedom/belgium/).

<sup>33</sup> “World University Rankings 2024 by Subject: Law.” *Times Higher Education (THE)*, 31 Oct. 2023, [www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/2024/subject-ranking/law](http://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/2024/subject-ranking/law).

125 position and later by the University of Namur, which is not represented in the law school ranking but is ranked 601-800th on a university level.

In its mission statement, KU Leuven says: “As the world's oldest Catholic university, KU Leuven places special emphasis on ethical considerations in the pursuit of knowledge. The result is a university committed to an important and involved role in the broader progress of our society”, highlighting its service for the common good<sup>34</sup>. UCLouvain also mentions its shared Christian origin with KU Leuven<sup>35</sup>.

In terms of law program, UCLouvain aims for its graduates to “never depart from an ethical and moral vision of law and justice, leading them to relentlessly question the meaning and the relevance of the rules that it will create or apply, while also fight in the name of the common good”<sup>36</sup>. At the same time, all three universities point to the excellence component for their graduates. KU Leuven also has a general university-wide rule that every student has 15 hours of religious studies and service-learning programs (KU Leuven Engage), where law students can practice their skills to help those who need professional legal aid, mainly prisoners.

As for the specific courses, KU Leuven has a Philosophy of Law<sup>37</sup>, UCLouvain teaches Ethics Applied to Law, Philosophy and Philosophical Anthropology; Societies, cultures, religions: biblical readings/ethical questions/fundamental human questions<sup>38</sup>, while the University of Namur offers Religious Sciences, Philosophy of Law, Foundations of Ethics, and Questions of Ethics Applied to Digital<sup>39</sup>. In most cases, the high-ranking positions at the universities and their units are also subject to the bishop’s approval, but it has rather a formal role in the process.

### *The Netherlands*

The Hague is often referred to as the legal capital of the world. It is home to the International Criminal Court, International Court of Justice, Eurojust, and Europol. There are 9 law schools in the Netherlands, two of them belong to Catholic universities. The percentage of Catholics has decreased steadily in the last 20 years<sup>40</sup>. Currently, only 20% of the population in The Netherlands

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<sup>34</sup> “About KU Leuven.” *About KU Leuven - KU Leuven*, [www.kuleuven.be/english/about-kuleuven](http://www.kuleuven.be/english/about-kuleuven). Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

<sup>35</sup> “Missions, Vision, Valeurs.” *UCLouvain*, [uclouvain.be/fr/decouvrir/missions-vision-valeurs.html](http://uclouvain.be/fr/decouvrir/missions-vision-valeurs.html). Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

<sup>36</sup> “Master of Laws (LL.M) (Leuven) (60 ECTS) Master of Laws.” *Master of Laws (LL.M) (Leuven) - KU Leuven*, [onderwijsaanbod.kuleuven.be/opleidingen/e/SC\\_53238752.htm#bl=all](http://onderwijsaanbod.kuleuven.be/opleidingen/e/SC_53238752.htm#bl=all). Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

<sup>37</sup> Philosophy of law is a standard class for law students, and it does not necessarily contain the Catholic doctrine in it, but it is still included in the list as it may somehow correspond to the Catholic lens behind the law today.

<sup>38</sup> “Bachelier En Droit - Programme Détaillé Par Matière.” *UCLouvain*, [uclouvain.be/prog-2023-droi1ba-programme](http://uclouvain.be/prog-2023-droi1ba-programme). Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

<sup>39</sup> “Bachelier En Droit.” *UNamur*, [directory.unamur.be/teaching/programmes/100B](http://directory.unamur.be/teaching/programmes/100B). Accessed 26 Dec. 2023.

<sup>40</sup> “Katholieken.” *KASKI*, [www.ru.nl/kaski/onderzoek/cijfers-rooms/virtuele\\_map/katholieken](http://www.ru.nl/kaski/onderzoek/cijfers-rooms/virtuele_map/katholieken). Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

identifies as Catholics<sup>41</sup>. However, there are still two Catholic universities that train future lawyers.

The first Catholic university was Tilburg University, founded in 1927, and it started teaching law in 1963. Today, Tilburg is recognized as the 18th best law school in the world by Times Higher Education<sup>42</sup>. The university aims to develop and share knowledge to benefit people and society. It is dedicated to sustainable, broad prosperity for all today and future generations<sup>43</sup>. The law faculty shares the mission without further contextualization in the legal field. There are courses on the Philosophy of Law and Business Ethics that can be related to the Catholic identity of the university<sup>44</sup>. The research topics are focused on Socio-Technical Change, Connecting Organizations in a Sustainable Society, Global Governance, etc<sup>45</sup>.

The second is Radboud University Nijmegen, which was established in 1923 to protect the Catholics who were underrepresented in society, especially in law and medicine. However, it seems that with time, when the underrepresentation issue was resolved, the Catholic mission got blurred. The Dutch Bishops' Conference decided to withdraw the "Catholic" designation from the Catholic University Foundation (SKU)<sup>46</sup>, the supervisory authority of Radboud University, in response to a decision to open a Transgender Care Center at the university's medical centre<sup>47</sup>. The local bishop conference has appealed to the *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, claiming that Radboud University does not have a missionary function and that they have little influence over the Radboud University, thus not considering it Catholic. Later, the Vatican said that the University still can be considered Catholic and that the decision concerns only the supervisory board<sup>48</sup>. As of August 2023, Radboud University was still on the list of Catholic universities<sup>49</sup>.

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<sup>41</sup> CBS. "What Are the Major Religions?" *CBS*, 17 Jan. 2022, [longreads.cbs.nl/the-netherlands-in-numbers-2021/what-are-the-major-religions/](https://longreads.cbs.nl/the-netherlands-in-numbers-2021/what-are-the-major-religions/).

<sup>42</sup> "Tilburg University." *Times Higher Education (THE)*, 25 Sept. 2023, [www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/tilburg-university](https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/tilburg-university).

<sup>43</sup> "About Tilburg University." *Tilburg University*, [www.tilburguniversity.edu/about](https://www.tilburguniversity.edu/about). Accessed 26 Dec. 2023.

<sup>44</sup> Tessahoffland. "Radboud University No Longer Catholic." *Erasmus Magazine*, 22 Oct. 2020, [www.erasmusmagazine.nl/en/2020/10/22/radboud-university-no-longer-catholic/](https://www.erasmusmagazine.nl/en/2020/10/22/radboud-university-no-longer-catholic/).

<sup>45</sup> "Research Tilburg Law School." *Tilburg University*, [www.tilburguniversity.edu/research/law](https://www.tilburguniversity.edu/research/law). Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

<sup>46</sup> "Geschiedenis van de Radboud Universiteit." *Radboud Universiteit*, [www.ru.nl/over-ons/geschiedenis-en-identiteit/geschiedenis-van-de-radboud-universiteit](https://www.ru.nl/over-ons/geschiedenis-en-identiteit/geschiedenis-van-de-radboud-universiteit). Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

<sup>47</sup> PillarCatholic (2023) Going Dutch? bishops, university split over Catholic identity. Available at: <https://www.pillaratholic.com/p/going-dutch-bishops-university-split-over-catholic-identity> (Accessed: 24 Dec. 2023).

<sup>48</sup> Ibid

<sup>49</sup> According to the Roman Catholic Diocese of Groningen-Leeuwarden in response to the email request.

### *France*

While Catholicism had been the official state religion of France until the French Revolution, the population today is mainly secular. A little bit more than half (51%) of the population identifies as having no religion, while only 29% identify as Catholics<sup>50</sup>. Today, France holds 6 Catholic law schools. Due to national legislation, Catholic universities cooperate with public universities to issue a state-recognized law diploma in law.

The six universities are the Catholic University of the West (1373), the Catholic University of Lyon, the Catholic Institute of Paris, the Catholic University of Lille (all founded in 1875), the Catholic University of Toulouse (1877), the Catholic University of Rennes (1989), and the Catholic Institute of Higher Studies (1990). None of these universities are represented in the global law school or university ranking from the Times Higher Education in 2024.

The universities oftentimes precisely state their Catholic affiliation. For example, the Catholic University of Lyon “affirms its intention to work on societal topics in the tradition, continually updated, of the Church’s social thinking”, highlighting service to society and Catholic Social Doctrine<sup>51</sup>, Catholic Institute of Paris is “inspired by a long Christian and Humanistic tradition”<sup>52</sup>, and the Catholic University of Toulouse is “at the service of society and the Church”<sup>53</sup>. Numerous values, such as solidarity, service, and excellence, also follow this.

Law program descriptions share the mission without further contextualization in terms of law, except for an indirect mention from the Catholic University of Lyon, which aims “to train quality jurists but also critical thinkers, who will be active in the development of our society”<sup>54</sup>. As for the courses, there are Christianity and the Origins of the United States course at the Catholic University of Toulouse and Theology as an elective for law students in the Catholic Institute of Higher Studies<sup>55</sup>.

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<sup>50</sup> “Immigrants and Descendants of Immigrants 2023 Edition.” *Insee*, [www.insee.fr/en/statistiques/7342918?sommaire=7344042](http://www.insee.fr/en/statistiques/7342918?sommaire=7344042). Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

<sup>51</sup> “The Lyon Catholic University Charter.” *UCLy*, 15 Nov. 2023, [www.ucl.fr/en/ucl/our-institution/overview/facts-figures/charter-ucl/](http://www.ucl.fr/en/ucl/our-institution/overview/facts-figures/charter-ucl/).

<sup>52</sup> Paris, Institut Catholique de. “Discover ICP.” *ICP Paris - Institut Catholique de Paris*, [en.icp.fr/about-icp/discover-icp](http://en.icp.fr/about-icp/discover-icp). Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

<sup>53</sup> “Missions et Charte - ICT- Institut Catholique de Toulouse.” *ICT*, 18 Feb. 2021, [www.ict-toulouse.fr/nous-connaitre/charte-2/](http://www.ict-toulouse.fr/nous-connaitre/charte-2/).

<sup>54</sup> “Faculty of Law.” *UCLy*, 3 Feb. 2022, [www.ucl.fr/en/ucl/our-poles/law-faculty/](http://www.ucl.fr/en/ucl/our-poles/law-faculty/).

<sup>55</sup> “Licence Droit.” *ICES (Institut Catholique de Vendée)*, [ices.fr/formation/licence-droit/](http://ices.fr/formation/licence-droit/). Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

### *Spain*

By having 14 Catholic law schools, Spain is a leader by their number. The country has deep ties with the Holy See. In 1979, after the death of Franco and becoming a constitutional monarchy, Spain signed four full-scale concordats with the Vatican concerning legal, educational, military, and financial matters<sup>56</sup>. According to Article 2 of the Education Concordat, Catholic religious education is a mandatory course in state schools, and the teachers are to be approved by the local bishop. 53% of the population identify as Catholics.

The fourteen Catholic Law Schools are the Deusto University (1886), Comillas Pontifical University (1890), María Cristina Royal University Center (1892), CEU San Pablo University, Francisco de Vitoria University (both founded in 1933), Pontifical University of Salamanca (1940), University of Navarra (1952), CEU Abat Oliba University (1973), Villanueva University (1977), Ramon Llull University (1990), Catholic University of Murcia, Catholic University of Ávila (both founded in 1996), CEU Cardenal Herrera University (1999), The Catholic University of Valencia (2003), and San Jorge University (2005). Among them, two are ranked in the global law school ranking by the Times Higher Education: University of Navarra (126-150) and Deusto University (251-300)<sup>57</sup>. What is also remarkable is that Spain is the only country where, despite the secularization tendency, there was a wave of new Catholic universities in the 1990s and early 2000s. Moreover, many of the universities had law since their founding.

In manifestation of Catholic affiliation, the universities use various formulations, namely protection and development of human dignity from a Christian conception of man” (Pontifical University of Salamanca)<sup>58</sup>, service for society through a specifically university-based contribution based on a Christian vision of reality (Deusto University)<sup>59</sup>, commitment to the common good, security, and justice, to defend the fundamental rights of people to promote the principle of equality (CEU Cardenal Herrera University)<sup>60</sup>, for the fullness of Christian life in work, family, and ordinary occupations (University of Navarra)<sup>61</sup>, Christian inspiration, where each person is a

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<sup>56</sup> “The Four 1979 Concordats: Concordat Watch - Spain.” *Www.Concordatwatch.Eu*, [www.concordatwatch.eu/the-four-1979-concordats--t34571](http://www.concordatwatch.eu/the-four-1979-concordats--t34571). Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

<sup>57</sup> “World University Rankings 2024 by Subject: Law.” *Times Higher Education (THE)*, 31 Oct. 2023, [www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/2024/subject-ranking/law](http://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/2024/subject-ranking/law).

<sup>58</sup> “Declaración de Identidad.” *UPSA*, [www.upsa.es/la-universidad/declaracion-de-identidad](http://www.upsa.es/la-universidad/declaracion-de-identidad). Accessed 27 Dec. 2023.

<sup>59</sup> “Mission and Identity.” *Deusto*, [www.deusto.es/en/home/we-are-deusto/the-university/mission-identity](http://www.deusto.es/en/home/we-are-deusto/the-university/mission-identity). Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

<sup>60</sup> Digital, Servicio de Comunicación. “Estudiar Grado En Derecho En Valencia / Elche.” *Universidad CEU Cardenal Herrera*, [www.uchceu.es/estudios/grado/derecho/](http://www.uchceu.es/estudios/grado/derecho/). Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

<sup>61</sup> *About the University. University of Navarra*, [en.unav.edu/about-the-university](http://en.unav.edu/about-the-university). Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

central character and unique (Villanueva University)<sup>62</sup>, spirit of solidarity and service for a fairer society (Ramon Llull University)<sup>63</sup>.

What is interesting is that Spanish Catholic universities put human rights as a university mission, thus defining the importance of the law schools within the Catholic university (mentioned by the Catholic University of Ávila (UCAV) and University of Navarra<sup>64</sup>). Another interesting component that became visible among the statements is that there is an aim to put the person at the centre (mentioned by Francisco de Vitoria University<sup>65</sup> and Villanueva University<sup>66</sup>), which is also a Christian concept.

As for the law schools, the statements in most of the cases deepen the Catholic mission in the legal context, either directly or indirectly: “science that tells us what we can and cannot do to build a fairer, more balanced society” (Deusto University)<sup>67</sup>, men and women with values, sensitive to the common good and committed to respect for human dignity and with service to your community (María Cristina Royal University Center)<sup>68</sup>, “Do Good, Do Better” (Ramon Llull University)<sup>69</sup>, professionals who would have not only the academic knowledge but also the values to help others in society (Francisco de Vitoria University)<sup>70</sup>, etc. Among the courses that mark law schools within Catholic universities in Spain are Christian Vision of Man and Society, Christian Ethics and Professional Deontology (Pontifical University of Salamanca)<sup>71</sup>, Christianity and Social Ethics (Comillas Pontifical University)<sup>72</sup>, Law and Religion in a Democratic State, The Person and the Family in the Social Doctrine of the Church; Philosophy of Law (CEU San Pablo University)<sup>73</sup>, Ethics, Theodicy: Essence and Attributes of God, Theodicy: existence of God (University of Navarra)<sup>74</sup>, Natural Law and Human

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<sup>62</sup> “Mission, Vision and Values.” *Universidad Villanueva*, 9 June 2021, [www.villanueva.edu/en/mission-vision-and-values/](http://www.villanueva.edu/en/mission-vision-and-values/).

<sup>63</sup> “The Institution.” *Universitat Ramon Llull*, 12 Jan. 2023, [www.url.edu/en/url/institution](http://www.url.edu/en/url/institution).

<sup>64</sup> *About the University. University of Navarra*, [en.unav.edu/about-the-university](http://en.unav.edu/about-the-university). Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

<sup>65</sup> “Sobre La UFV.” *UFV*, [www.ufv.es/la-universidad/sobre-ufv/](http://www.ufv.es/la-universidad/sobre-ufv/). Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

<sup>66</sup> “Mission, Vision and Values.” *Universidad Villanueva*, 9 June 2021, [www.villanueva.edu/en/mission-vision-and-values/](http://www.villanueva.edu/en/mission-vision-and-values/).

<sup>67</sup> “Bachelor’s Degree in Law.” *Deusto*, [www.deusto.es/en/home/study/courses/bachelors-degree/ba-in-law](http://www.deusto.es/en/home/study/courses/bachelors-degree/ba-in-law). Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

<sup>68</sup> “Identidad y Método.” *Real Centro Universitario María Cristina*, 11 May 2022, [rcumariacristina.es/identidad-y-metodo/](http://rcumariacristina.es/identidad-y-metodo/).

<sup>69</sup> “Who We Are.” *Esade*, [www.esade.edu/en/about-us/who-we-are](http://www.esade.edu/en/about-us/who-we-are). Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

<sup>70</sup> “Estudiar Grado Derecho Madrid. Carrera Universidad Privada.” *UFV*, [www.ufv.es/estudiar-grado-derecho-madrid/](http://www.ufv.es/estudiar-grado-derecho-madrid/). Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

<sup>71</sup> “Grado Online En Derecho - 50% En La Matriculación.” *UPSA*, [www.upsa.es/oferta-academica/grado-en-derecho-online](http://www.upsa.es/oferta-academica/grado-en-derecho-online). Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

<sup>72</sup> “Bachelor’s Degree in Law (E-1).” *COMILLAS*, [www.comillas.edu/en/degrees/bachelors-degree-in-law-e-1/](http://www.comillas.edu/en/degrees/bachelors-degree-in-law-e-1/). Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

<sup>73</sup> *Bachelor’s Degree in Law in Madrid | CEU San Pablo*, [www.uspceu.com/en/academic-programmes/degree/law](http://www.uspceu.com/en/academic-programmes/degree/law). Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

<sup>74</sup> *Study Program. Degree in Law. University of Navarra*, [en.unav.edu/web/degree-in-law/study-program](http://en.unav.edu/web/degree-in-law/study-program). Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

Rights, Fundamental Ethics, and Social doctrine of the church (Catholic University of Murcia)<sup>75</sup>, Introduction to Christianity and Christian Social Thought (Catholic University of Ávila)<sup>76</sup>, Freedom of Religion (San Jorge University)<sup>77</sup>, Mind, Science and Religion, Moral Social Deontology, Science, and Reason and Faith (Catholic University of Valencia)<sup>78</sup>.

### *Portugal*

Portugal has historically been very close to the Catholic Church, and is home to the World Youth Day, where young people from all around the world unite to get closer to Faith. 81% of its population identifies as Catholics. The country also has a Catholic university that teaches future law professionals.<sup>79</sup>

The Catholic University of Portugal was established in 1967 by the Roman Congregation of Catholic Education and started teaching law in 1978<sup>80</sup>. Today, the university “thoroughly, constructively and critically helps strengthen and develop the human race and its cultural heritage”. It is characterized by a Christian vision of mankind that is deeply rooted in the principles of the Gospel and truth-seeking<sup>81</sup>.

The law school aims to continue the students' intellectual, ethical, and cultural training through its Unit for the Integral Development of the Person. Attention is also given to the personal approach; each individual student is at the centre of the learning process<sup>82</sup>. Additionally, the “Law School is known for its demands and for expecting its students to reach levels of excellence”<sup>83</sup>. For this purpose, the law school offers specific courses, namely Christian Worldview and Bioethics with Biolaw<sup>84</sup>.

### *Italy*

As a country that nurtured the first universities in profoundly Christian medieval Europe, Italy is a secular state today. Despite that, 80% of the population identifies as Catholics, and the country has a longstanding tradition of Catholicism. The turning point was when Italy signed the 1984 Lateran Concordat, which amended the basics of interaction between the Italian government and the Holy

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<sup>75</sup> “Grado En Derecho.” *COMILLAS*, [www.comillas.edu/grados/grado-en-derecho-e-1/#planestudios](http://www.comillas.edu/grados/grado-en-derecho-e-1/#planestudios). Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

<sup>76</sup> Roman, Carlos. “Grado En Derecho (Online).” *Ucavila*, 15 Dec. 2022, [www.ucavila.es/formacion/grados/derecho-online/](http://www.ucavila.es/formacion/grados/derecho-online/).

<sup>77</sup> *Grado En Derecho - USJ*, [www.usj.es/sites/default/files/content/ficha\\_derecho\\_2021\\_2022.pdf](http://www.usj.es/sites/default/files/content/ficha_derecho_2021_2022.pdf). Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

<sup>78</sup> “Universidad Católica de Valencia.” *Grado En Derecho*, [www.ucv.es/oferta-academica/facultades/facultad-de-ciencias-juridicas-economicas-y-sociales/grado-en-derecho](http://www.ucv.es/oferta-academica/facultades/facultad-de-ciencias-juridicas-economicas-y-sociales/grado-en-derecho). Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

<sup>79</sup> Pier. “Portuguese Culture - Religion.” *Cultural Atlas*, [culturalatlas.sbs.com.au/portuguese-culture/portuguese-culture-religion](http://culturalatlas.sbs.com.au/portuguese-culture/portuguese-culture-religion). Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

<sup>80</sup> “História.” *UCP*, [www.ucp.pt/pt-pt/catolicainstitucional/historia](http://www.ucp.pt/pt-pt/catolicainstitucional/historia). Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> “Faculdade de Direito - Escola Do Porto.” *FD*, [fd.porto.ucp.pt/](http://fd.porto.ucp.pt/). Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

<sup>83</sup> “Fatores Diferenciadores.” *FD*, 5 July 2023, [fd.porto.ucp.pt/pt-pt/licenciaturas/licenciatura-em-direito/fatores-diferenciadores](http://fd.porto.ucp.pt/pt-pt/licenciaturas/licenciatura-em-direito/fatores-diferenciadores).

<sup>84</sup> “Plano de Estudos.” *FD*, 23 July 2020, [fd.porto.ucp.pt/pt-pt/licenciaturas/licenciatura-em-direito/plano-de-estudos](http://fd.porto.ucp.pt/pt-pt/licenciaturas/licenciatura-em-direito/plano-de-estudos).



See. Interestingly, the Concordat in Article 10 also mentioned that Catholic universities still shall submit themselves to the Catholic Church<sup>85</sup>. Today, four such universities educate future lawyers.

These are Pontifical Lateran University (founded in 1773), the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart (1921), the Libera Università Maria SS. Assunta (1939), and the European University of Rome (2005). The Catholic University of the Sacred Heart holds the 201-250 position in the world law school ranking by Times Higher Education<sup>86</sup>.

The universities have various Catholic-affiliated missions. In the case of Pontifical Lateran University, it is to ensure the dimension of Catholicity, which simultaneously guarantees students' cultural, human, and pastoral growth<sup>87</sup>, while for the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart, the mission is addressing and resolving in the light of the Christian message and moral principles the problems of society and culture. In addition to that, the latter puts a strong focus on every student being at the centre, saying that everything they give to each student becomes a resource for society, where professionalism is followed by humanity and trust<sup>88</sup>. The idea of students in the centre is also mentioned by the European University of Rome (UER)<sup>89</sup>.

In terms of law school missions, they do not elaborate on the university-level mission in the legal context. The Catholic University of the Sacred Heart expects its students to address society's problems in which they will operate with a critical spirit, capacity for dialogue, relational sensitivity, and, above all, a sense of justice<sup>90</sup>. That is further implemented through specific courses: Relationships between Church and Civil Society, History of Canon Law and Legal Culture (Pontifical Lateran University)<sup>91</sup>, Philosophy of Law and Theology (Catholic University of the Sacred Heart)<sup>92</sup>, Philosophy of Law, Dogmatic Theology, Vatican Law Workshop, Moral Theology, and The Social Doctrine of the Church (Libera Università Maria SS. Assunta)<sup>93</sup>, and

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<sup>85</sup> "Modifications to the Lateran Concordat (1984): Text: Concordat Watch - Italy." *Www.Concordatwatch.Eu*, [www.concordatwatch.eu/modifications-to-the-lateran-concordat-1984-text--t39221](http://www.concordatwatch.eu/modifications-to-the-lateran-concordat-1984-text--t39221). Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

<sup>86</sup> "World University Rankings 2024 by Subject: Law." *Times Higher Education (THE)*, 31 Oct. 2023, [www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/2024/subject-ranking/law](http://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/2024/subject-ranking/law).

<sup>87</sup> "Pontificia Università Lateranense." *Pontificia Università Lateranense*, [www.pul.va/en/](http://www.pul.va/en/). Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

<sup>88</sup> "Università Cattolica." *Università Cattolica Del Sacro Cuore*, [www.unicatt.eu/universita-cattolica](http://www.unicatt.eu/universita-cattolica). Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

<sup>89</sup> *The European University of Rome (2022) Università Europea di Roma*. Available at: [https://www.universitaeuropeadiroma.it/en/university/#tab\\_mission](https://www.universitaeuropeadiroma.it/en/university/#tab_mission) (Accessed: 24 December 2023).

<sup>90</sup> "Giurisprudenza: Università Cattolica." *Università Cattolica Del Sacro Cuore*, [www.unicatt.it/facolta/giurisprudenza.html](http://www.unicatt.it/facolta/giurisprudenza.html). Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

<sup>91</sup> G. Ballarani – *Diritto Di Famiglia (20212) Programma per l'A.A. 2023-2024*, Facoltà di Diritto civile, [www.pul.va/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/CIVILE\\_PROGRAMMI\\_11.23.pdf](http://www.pul.va/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/CIVILE_PROGRAMMI_11.23.pdf). Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

<sup>92</sup> "Giurisprudenza : Curriculum: Indirizzo Amministrativo: Università Cattolica: Università Cattolica." *Università Cattolica Del Sacro Cuore*, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, [www.unicatt.it/corsi/triennale/giurisprudenza-milano/piani-di-studio-2022-23/curriculum-indirizzo-amministrativo.html](http://www.unicatt.it/corsi/triennale/giurisprudenza-milano/piani-di-studio-2022-23/curriculum-indirizzo-amministrativo.html). Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

<sup>93</sup> "Giurisprudenza - Roma." *Università Di Roma LUMSA*, [lumsa.it/it/corsi/giurisprudenza-roma](http://lumsa.it/it/corsi/giurisprudenza-roma). Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

Law, Person, Society; Legal Ethics, and Christian law and Civilization (European University of Rome)<sup>94</sup>.

In terms of faculty, the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart was directly mentioned in the Concordat of 1984 referred to above. Article 10 states that teaching staff appointments at the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart and allied institutions are subject to approval by the competent ecclesiastical authority according to a candidate's religious profile<sup>95</sup>.

### *Slovenia*

The Habsburg Empire impacted the Slovenian religious landscape and resulted in the fact that it was predominantly Catholic before WW2. In 1943, with the emergence of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia, the Catholic Church was under strict state control, and many of its representatives were persecuted<sup>96</sup>. With the start of communist rule, about 250 priests were imprisoned, and 200 others fled to the West, many intellectuals went into exile<sup>97</sup>. Today, Slovenia enjoys a strong separation between the State and the Church. Article 72 of the Act on the Organization and Functioning of Education of 1996 stipulates that state-funded public and private schools are prohibited from offering religious or confessional education to teach religion. They are also prohibited from allowing a religious community to influence the content, teaching materials, and qualifications of the teaching staff<sup>98</sup>. Still, almost 60 per cent of Slovenians identify as Catholics, and the country has a foundation for the Catholic University<sup>99</sup>.

Today, there is a Faculty of Law and Business Studies (FLBS), which aims to set a basis for a future Catholic university<sup>100</sup>. Opened in 2010, it identifies as an “autonomous community of scientists, teachers and students that respects personal freedom and dignity of each individual and is committed to contributing for a true science and expertise from the fields of humanities and social sciences and a deeper culture and a more complete realization of human-being”, highlighting

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<sup>94</sup> “Corso Di Laurea in Giurisprudenza - Giurisprudenza - Uer: Università Europea Di Roma.” *Giurisprudenza - UER | Università Europea Di Roma*, [www.universitaeuropadiroma.it/giurisprudenza/corso/laurea-in-giurisprudenza-a-ciclo-unico/](http://www.universitaeuropadiroma.it/giurisprudenza/corso/laurea-in-giurisprudenza-a-ciclo-unico/). Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

<sup>95</sup> “Modifications to the Lateran Concordat (1984): Text: Concordat Watch - Italy.” *www.Concordatwatch.Eu*, [www.concordatwatch.eu/modifications-to-the-lateran-concordat-1984-text--t39221](http://www.concordatwatch.eu/modifications-to-the-lateran-concordat-1984-text--t39221). Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

<sup>96</sup> Stan, Lavinia, and Lucian Turcescu. *Church, State, and Democracy in Expanding Europe*. Oxford University Press, 2011, p. 168.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid*, p. 168.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid*, p. 174.

<sup>99</sup> R., Written by Bluenn. “How Many (and What) Religions Can We Find in Slovenia?: Slovenia Tour, 4 Sept. 2020, [sloveniatour.si/how-many-and-what-religions-can-we-find-in-slovenia/](http://sloveniatour.si/how-many-and-what-religions-can-we-find-in-slovenia/).

<sup>100</sup> Inštitut, Katoliški. “International.” *Katoliški Inštitut*, [www.katoliski-institut.si/en/international](http://www.katoliski-institut.si/en/international). Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

respect to the dignity and society-oriented mission<sup>101</sup>. FLBS believes that its education should promote excellence and stand on the values of the Catholic tradition<sup>102</sup>.

Currently, the Faculty offers a master's degree program in law, which highlights ethical decision-making and excellent knowledge. This approach is reflected through a set of specific courses, namely Philosophy and Religion, State Ecclesiastical Law, and Canon Law<sup>103</sup>.

### *Hungary*

Among Hungary's almost 10 million population, 51% identify as Catholics, while 23% have no religious affiliation at all<sup>104</sup>. Unlike the global tendency, the Hungarian PM has aimed to make public education more Christian. This also means becoming more Catholic due to the percentage of the Catholic population and support of the initiative from Pope Francis<sup>105</sup>. Even though the movement mostly touched school education, it has shaped the overall agenda in the country.

In Hungary, one Catholic university teaches future lawyers – Pázmány Péter Catholic University. It has a long history, rooted back to the 17th century, and since 1993, it has held official state accreditation.

The university states that its mission is fundamentally determined by its Catholic affiliation. The University envisions it as both the transmission of traditional knowledge and values necessary for the development of the entire human personality and the formation of the information society and its adaptation to human fulfilment<sup>106</sup>.

As for the law school, it offers various law programs and focuses on the legal culture of its students. The general law program includes courses: The World of the Bible, Basic Ethics, Christian Morality and Legal Ethics, The Foundations of the Catholic Faith, Bioethics, Legal Ethical Problems, and Natural Law as mandatory courses for a 5-year-long program<sup>107</sup>.

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<sup>101</sup> "Mission, Vision, and Strategy." *Katolishi Institut*, [www.katoliski-institut.si/en/about-faculty/mission-vision-and-strategy](http://www.katoliski-institut.si/en/about-faculty/mission-vision-and-strategy). Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> "Courses." *Katolishi Institut*, [www.katoliski-institut.si/en/study/masters-studies/law/courses](http://www.katoliski-institut.si/en/study/masters-studies/law/courses). Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

<sup>104</sup> "Hungary - United States Department of State." U.S. Department of State, U.S. Department of State, 7 Dec. 2023, [www.state.gov/reports/2022-report-on-international-religious-freedom/hungary/](http://www.state.gov/reports/2022-report-on-international-religious-freedom/hungary/).

<sup>105</sup> France 24. "Crosses and Catechism: Hungary's Push to 'christianise' Education." *France 24*, FRANCE 24, 9 Sept. 2021, [www.france24.com/en/live-news/20210909-crosses-and-catechism-hungary-s-push-to-christianise-education](http://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20210909-crosses-and-catechism-hungary-s-push-to-christianise-education).

<sup>106</sup> "Kik Vagyunk?" *PPKE.HU*, [ppke.hu/kik-vagyunk](http://ppke.hu/kik-vagyunk). Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

<sup>107</sup> At the moment, it is not available online, but it used to be available at <https://ppke.hu/jolj-jog-k-165?page=15>.

Among the electives, some courses contribute to the Catholic identity, such as A History of Political Thought from the Beginning to St. Thomas Aquinas, Holy See in International Law and Crisis Management, The Jurisprudence of the Court of Justice of the European Union and the European Court of Human Rights related to freedom of religion - Some discrimination cases and their possible justification<sup>108</sup>.

### *Poland*

One of the defining elements in the identity of Poland today is the religion, especially the Roman Catholic Church. According to the Pew Research Center, 87% of Poles identified as Catholics in 2018, marking the highest percentage in Europe<sup>109</sup>. It influences cultural life and oftentimes becomes central in the political debate<sup>110</sup>.

In 1993, in front of the new Constitution, Poland and the Vatican signed the Concordat. Article 15 states that the Republic of Poland shall guarantee the Catholic Church the right to establish and freely manage higher educational establishments, including universities and research centres<sup>111</sup>. Today, two Catholic universities educate future law professionals – The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin (KUL) and Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw (UKSW).

The UKSW is a state university established by the Polish parliament, which is contrary to the common standard where Catholic universities are private. Both KUL and Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University manifest their Catholic mission: to serve God and the Homeland - *Deo et Patriae* (KUL)<sup>112</sup> and to search for God in all dimensions of modern society (UKSW)<sup>113</sup>.

The law schools elaborate on the mission in the legal context. In the case of KUL, it is to teach future lawyers to be distinctive through their professionalism, openness to people, service to the

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<sup>108</sup> At the moment, it is not available online, but it used to be available at <https://ppke.hu/jolj-jog-sz-165?page=19>.

<sup>109</sup> Starr, Kelsey Jo. “5 Facts about Catholics in Europe.” Pew Research Center, Pew Research Center, 19 Dec. 2018, [www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2018/12/19/5-facts-about-catholics-in-europe/](http://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2018/12/19/5-facts-about-catholics-in-europe/).

<sup>110</sup> Mach, Zdzisław. “The Roman Catholic Church in Poland and the Dynamics of Social Identity in Polish Society.” *The Religious Roots of Contemporary European Identity*, edited by Lucia Faltin and Melanie Jane Wright, Continuum International Publishing Group, London, 2011, pp. 117–133.

<sup>111</sup> “Polish Concordat (1993): Text and Criticism: Concordat Watch - Poland.” [www.concordatwatch.eu](http://www.concordatwatch.eu), [www.concordatwatch.eu/showtopic.php?org\\_id=931&kb\\_header\\_id=1331](http://www.concordatwatch.eu/showtopic.php?org_id=931&kb_header_id=1331). Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

<sup>112</sup> “Historia Kul.” KUL Website, [www.kul.pl/historia,149.html](http://www.kul.pl/historia,149.html). Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

<sup>113</sup> “Strategia Rozwoju, Statut.” Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie, 21 Dec. 2023, [uksw.edu.pl/universytet/o-nas/misja-statut-strategia/](http://uksw.edu.pl/universytet/o-nas/misja-statut-strategia/).

truth, and common good<sup>114</sup>, while in UKSW, it is to apply knowledge in professional work while emphasizing the ethical principles behind it<sup>115</sup>.

UKSW also has a course on Legal Ethics<sup>116</sup>, and KUL provides Jurisprudence, Bible: essence and role in culture, Catholic Social Teaching and the social thought of John Paul II, Religious freedom in the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights and Bioethical law<sup>117</sup>.

### *Ukraine*

The population of Ukraine is mainly Orthodox Christian (72%), while the country also has a tradition of Catholicism, with its Ukrainian (Greek) Catholic Church (8%)<sup>118</sup>. The latter experienced severe persecution in the XX century. As the Soviet regime tried to eliminate religion, Ukrainian Catholic Church leaders were systematically repressed by Soviet rule. When the regime failed to break the leaders, it started using religion for its own purposes. For example, the official Soviet historiography even goes as far as to state that the church "liquidated itself" in 1946 and that its followers "voluntarily joined" the Russian Orthodox Church<sup>119</sup>. This story is in the very heart of Ukraine's only Catholic university – Ukrainian Catholic University.

The UCU is a successor of Lviv Theological Academy, which was founded in 1929. After years of occupation, emigration, and religious persecution, the Ukrainian Catholic University was re-established in 2002 in Lviv<sup>120</sup>. In 2017, the University launched its first master's degree program in law called "Human Rights". In 2020, the first bachelor's degree students stepped into the class, marking the opportunity to get a full cycle of legal education in a Catholic university.

It identifies as an "open academic community living the Eastern Christian tradition and forming leaders to serve with professional excellence in Ukraine and internationally – for the glory of God, the common good, and the dignity of the human person", highlighting the service and excellence component with respect to human dignity and common good<sup>121</sup>.

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<sup>114</sup> "Wydział Prawa, Prawa Kanonicznego I Administracji." KUL, [www.kul.pl/o-wydziale,11054.html](http://www.kul.pl/o-wydziale,11054.html). Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

<sup>115</sup> "Strona Główna." Wydział Prawa i Administracji UKSW, [wpia.uksw.edu.pl/kandydaci/kierunki-studiow/prawo/](http://wpia.uksw.edu.pl/kandydaci/kierunki-studiow/prawo/). Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

<sup>116</sup> "Strona Główna." Wydział Prawa i Administracji UKSW, [wpia.uksw.edu.pl/studenci/prawo-stacjonarne/plany-zajec/](http://wpia.uksw.edu.pl/studenci/prawo-stacjonarne/plany-zajec/). Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

<sup>117</sup> Plan Studiów, [e.kul.pl/qlprogram.html?ra=1&etap=0&kid=48&op=2](http://e.kul.pl/qlprogram.html?ra=1&etap=0&kid=48&op=2). Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

<sup>118</sup> Press Releases and Reports - Dynamics of Religious Self-Identification of the Population of Ukraine: Results of a Telephone Survey Conducted on July 6-20, 2022, [kiis.com.ua/?lang=eng&cat=reports&id=1129](http://kiis.com.ua/?lang=eng&cat=reports&id=1129). Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

<sup>119</sup> Soviet Repression of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, [diasporiana.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/books/21576/file.pdf](http://diasporiana.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/books/21576/file.pdf). Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

<sup>120</sup> Передумови – Усу, [ucu.edu.ua/en/about/istoriya-ta-fakty/peredumovy/](http://ucu.edu.ua/en/about/istoriya-ta-fakty/peredumovy/). Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

<sup>121</sup> About UCU - UCU - УКУ, [ucu.edu.ua/en/about/](http://ucu.edu.ua/en/about/). Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

The UCU Law School follows the university-wide mission to “form an influential community of like-minded people ready to uphold the same values and standards in the legal profession – in particular, service to society, moral responsibility, ethics, respect for human dignity, and human rights”<sup>122</sup>. That is implemented through specific courses that future law professionals have: Professional Ethics of a Lawyer, Philosophy of Law, Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church, Law and Religion<sup>123</sup>. In addition to that, bachelor’s degree students during the first and second year of studies have the university-wide program “Core Curriculum”, where they choose electives from different blocks, namely “God and I”, “World and I”, and “People and I”<sup>124</sup>.

### *Georgia*

As Ketevan Gurchiani has said, Georgia is a country where Orthodox Christianity is perceived as the main marker of national identity<sup>125</sup>. Today, 83% of the population are Orthodox Christians, 10% are Muslims, and the remaining 7% represent Catholics, Lutherans, Judaists, Jews, and other religious groups who also live in Georgia<sup>126</sup>.

Despite the minor number of Catholics in the country, there is a Catholic university that trains future lawyers – Sulkhani-Saba Orbeliani University. It was founded by a Catholic bishop in 2001 with only one faculty of Theology and has grown to 5 faculties today<sup>127</sup>. The university-wide mission statement touches on the concept of human dignity as an inseparable principle of the Catholic vision<sup>128</sup>. At the same time, the law faculty focuses on preparing qualified, competent, legally highly cultured, and professionally ethical lawyers and public officials<sup>129</sup>.

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<sup>122</sup> “Law School.” Школа Права УКУ – Сайт Школи Права Українського Католицького Університету, law.ucu.edu.ua/en/. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

<sup>123</sup> “Bachelor’s Program in Law.” *Bachelor’s Degree – Школа Права УКУ*, law.ucu.edu.ua/en/bachelor/. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> Jäggle, Martin, and Ketevan Gurchiani. “Religious Education at Schools in Georgia.” *Religious Education at Schools in Europe*, edited by Martin Rothgangel et al., V&R Unipress, Vienna University Press, Göttingen, 2020, pp. 95–121. 126. Ibid, page 97.

<sup>126</sup> Jäggle, Martin, and Ketevan Gurchiani. “Religious Education at Schools in Georgia.” *Religious Education at Schools in Europe*, edited by Martin Rothgangel et al., V&R Unipress, Vienna University Press, Göttingen, 2020, pp. 95–121. 126. Ibid, page 97.

<sup>127</sup> Sabauni. “University - History.” Sabauni, www.sabauni.edu.ge/en/content/chven-shesakheb/universiteti/istoria. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

<sup>128</sup> Sabauni. “University - Mission and Vision.” Sabauni, www.sabauni.edu.ge/en/content/chven-shesakheb/universiteti/misia-da-khedva. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

<sup>129</sup> Sabauni. “Faculty of Law.” Sabauni, www.sabauni.edu.ge/en/content/fakultetebi/samartlis-fakulteti. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

The law faculty held the Religion and Human Rights Conference in 2019<sup>130</sup>. Now, it offers three courses that can somehow reflect its Catholic affiliation: Religion and Society, Introduction to Jurisprudence, and Philosophy of Law<sup>131</sup>.

### *United Kingdom*

Throughout history, the Catholic Church has had many worships in the United Kingdom. Simply put, some Popes did not approve of the legitimacy of the English monarchy. In response, Catholics were discriminated against. However, despite past experiences and the common secularization tendency, Catholicism is still present in the United Kingdom. At least 8% of the population identify as Catholics, and Catholicism becomes the dominating religious affiliation in London<sup>132</sup>. In this landscape, 2 Catholic universities teach future lawyers in the UK: St. Mary's University Twickenham London, and Leeds Trinity University.

Both of the universities brightly show their Catholic mission: develop the whole person and empower their community to have a positive impact on the world through Catholic intellectual tradition<sup>133</sup> or transform lives through education, which would be informed by faith<sup>134</sup>.

## **VII. To sum up**

Despite the fact that each of the above universities operates in a different way, in a specific national context, and has a unique historical background, if one puts these pieces together, the overall picture of Catholic legal education in Europe could be seen. It will be a rather abstract picture with blurred images, but some trends can be identified: (1) law schools in Catholic universities are mostly modern and postmodern phenomena; (2) they gradually strengthens their teaching and research capacity; (3) law schools are more explicit about their Catholic mission in countries where the Catholic Church has been persecuted; (4) commitment to excellence, service-driven approach, respect for human dignity are common values.

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<sup>130</sup> Sabauni. “რექტები - ონფერენციები - აზაუნო.” Sabauni, [www.sabauni.edu.ge/ka/content/fakultetebi/samartlis-fakulteti/proektebi/konferentsiebi](http://www.sabauni.edu.ge/ka/content/fakultetebi/samartlis-fakulteti/proektebi/konferentsiebi). Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

<sup>131</sup> Sul Khan-Saba Orbelian University - Sabauni.Edu.Ge, [www.sabauni.edu.ge/img/file/1700552768--LAW%20BBA.pdf](http://www.sabauni.edu.ge/img/file/1700552768--LAW%20BBA.pdf). Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

<sup>132</sup> “London More Religious than Rest of Britain, Report Finds.” The Guardian, Guardian News and Media, 23 June 2020, [www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jun/24/london-more-religious-than-rest-britain-report-finds](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jun/24/london-more-religious-than-rest-britain-report-finds).

<sup>133</sup> “History and Heritage: St Mary's University.” St Marys University, [www.stmarys.ac.uk/about/history-and-heritage/our-campus.aspx](http://www.stmarys.ac.uk/about/history-and-heritage/our-campus.aspx). Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

<sup>134</sup> “Catholic Mission.” Leeds Trinity University, [www.leedstrinity.ac.uk/about/catholic-mission/](http://www.leedstrinity.ac.uk/about/catholic-mission/). Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

### **1. Today's law schools in Catholic universities are modern and postmodern phenomena, a reaction to the mainstream trend toward secularization**

Despite their affiliation with Catholic universities, the law schools are not direct successors of the medieval tradition, where law studies were one of the cornerstones of the first universities. The only exception to this rule is the oldest law school in a Catholic university – Leuven University, founded in 1425 (KU Leuven and UCLouvain today). Other law schools from the list were founded in the 14th (1), 19th (5), 20th (26), and 21st (6) centuries, while almost half of the list (18) opened between 1989 and 2017. The launch of a law school was not the initial step but rather was added in the coming years, marking the certain development stage of the university as an institution. As of today, 30 Catholic universities in Europe (out of 70) do not award degrees in law. For example, none of the five German Catholic universities has a law school. Only three out twelve universities with a Pontifical status encompass law degree programs. There might be different reasons behind such a decision of university management, but it is clear that universities keep some distance from legal and political life.

In modern Catholic universities, the opening of legal studies is, on the one hand, a response to certain social challenges and, on the other hand, a way of asserting and strengthening the university's impact in the society. The Ukrainian Catholic University School of Law was established after the Revolution of Dignity (2014) in response to the societal demand for liberty, justice, and respect for human dignity, for which a re-start of the legal system on a different value basis was needed. The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin and Pazmany Peter Catholic University opened law programs after the fall of the communist regime in Eastern and Central Europe, where there was also a demand for a fundamental transformation of the state. In Western Europe, the emergence of law schools in Catholic universities seems to be a response to the advancing tendency of secularization in the societies. Training of lawyers and conducting legal research in Catholic universities promote Catholic intellectual tradition by bringing Christian values and mindset to the public agenda on important social-political issues.

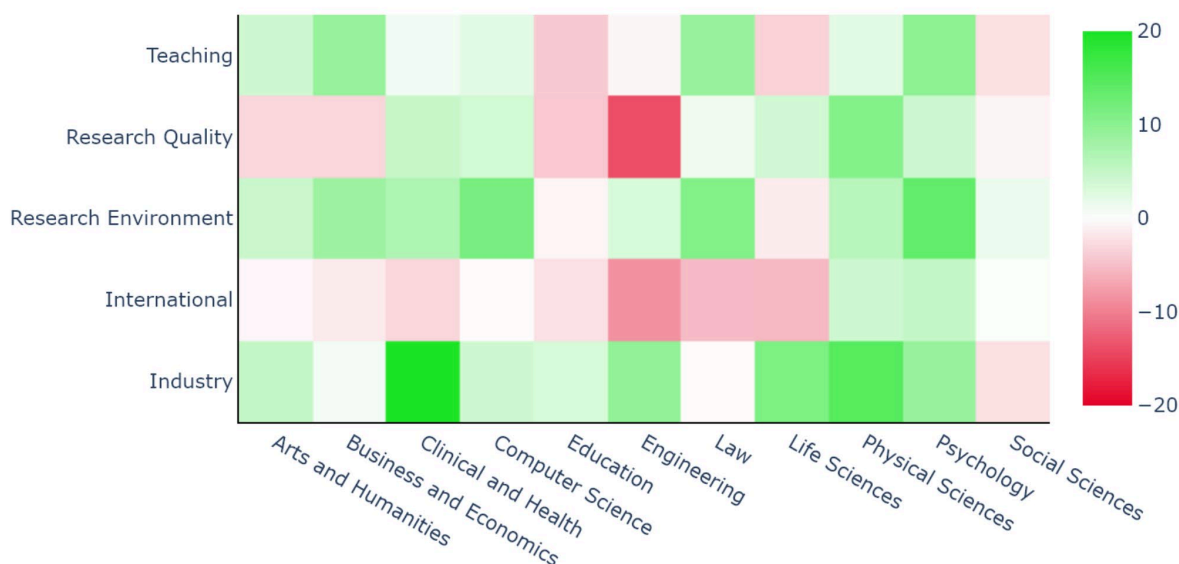
### **2. Modern law schools in Catholic universities are gradually strengthening their teaching and research capacity**

In recent decades, there has not only been an increase in the number of law schools within Catholic universities but also a quality progress. The law schools of the top European Catholic universities offer a high-class teaching, research and research environment in comparison with the European 500 highest ranking universities (under Times Higher Education World University Ranking 2024). At the same time, they score less in the international component, which includes a proportion of international students, international staff, and international collaboration, despite the fact that Catholic universities, in general, are doing quite well with internationalisation.

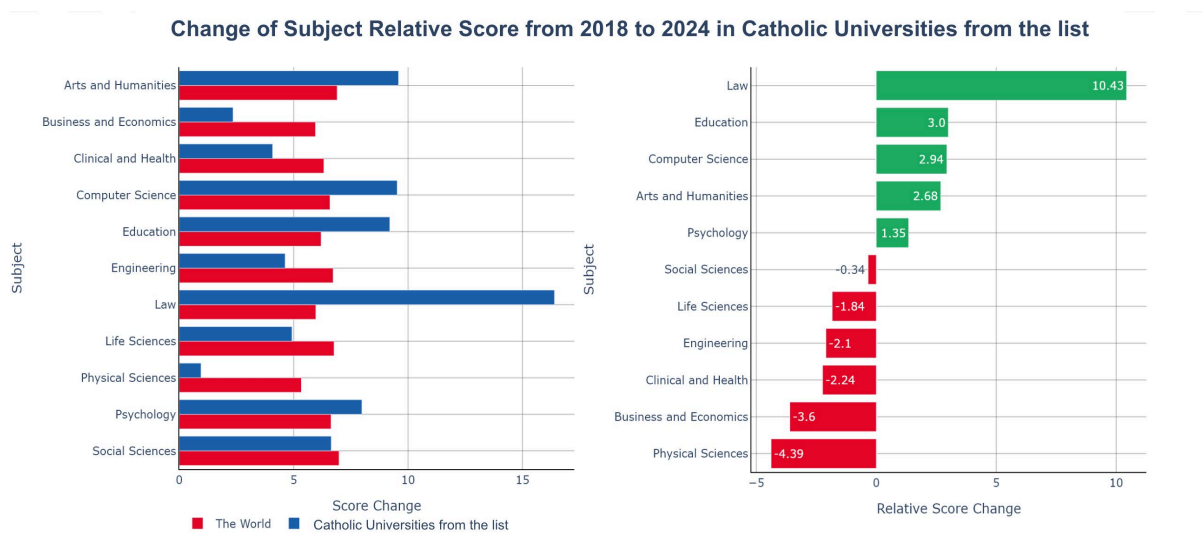


Thirteen out of forty Catholic universities, which provide degrees in law, are represented in the Times Higher Education World University Ranking, namely KU Leuven (45th), Radboud University Nijmegen (140th), UCLouvain (168th), Tilburg University (201-250th), Catholic University of the Sacred Heart (301-350th), University of Navarra (301-350th), University of Namur (601-800th), Ramon Llull University (601-800th), Catholic University of Portugal (801-100th), University of Deusto (800-1000th), UCAM (1201-1500th), The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin (1201-1500th), and Comillas Pontifical University (1501+).

**Catholic Universities from the list compared to Europe TOP 500  
WUR 2024: Comparison Heatmap**



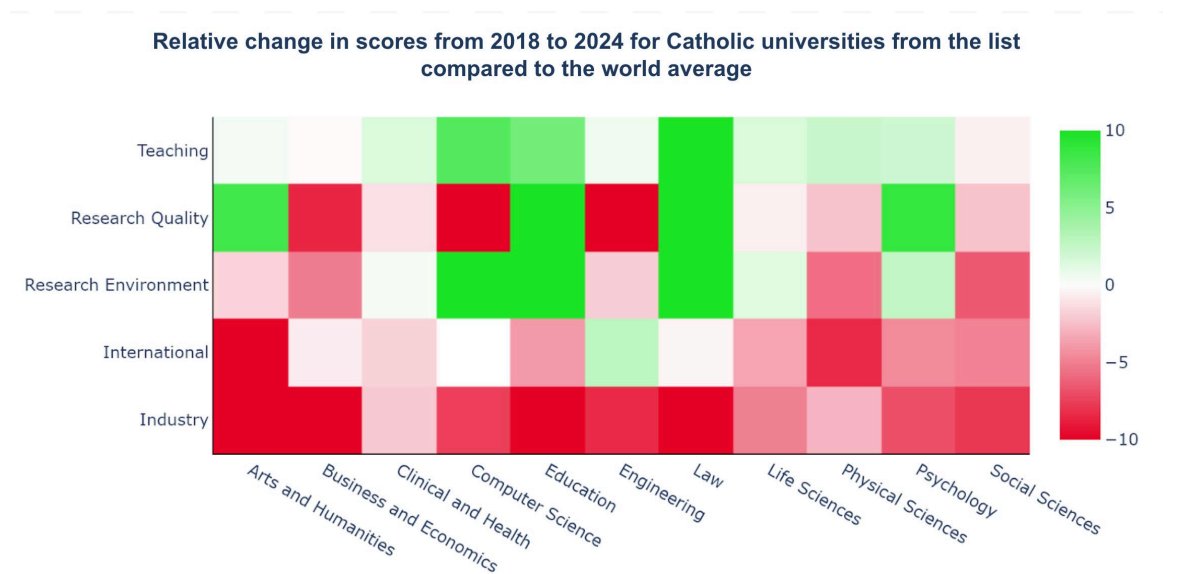
It is interesting to trace the performance of listed Catholic law schools in comparison to the average indicators of the Europe Top 500 in dynamic. Since 2018, the overall score of the law schools in Catholic universities in Europe has grown the most thanks to the progress shown below. If we compare recent developments of different subjects within enlisted Catholic universities and average indicators of the Top 500, we can notice two things: 1) enlisted Catholic universities in the field of law show almost three times higher gross in comparison to the average in Top 500 (see picture 1); 2) within enlisted Catholic universities law is the most developing subject (see picture 2).



Picture 1

Picture 2

If we decompose this growth into different elements, it is apparent that the scores increased primarily due to Teaching, Research Quality, and Research Environment indicators. At the same time, the Industry indicator has decreased, which is the case for all of the subjects in Catholic universities, with a slightly better situation in Clinical and Health and Physical Sciences. From 2018 to 2024, legal studies have improved the most among the disciplines taught at Catholic universities. It gained mostly in Teaching, Research Quality, and Research Environment but lost some points in Industry income, while the International has stayed the same.



Picture 3

Despite the relative nature of the university rankings, the analysis suggests that law schools of Catholic universities in Europe demonstrate high quality in teaching and research, which is a clear sign of a potential for further development. It is noteworthy that the most successful law schools

globally are those of Catholic universities, where the Christian academic tradition has not been interrupted since their founding in the 15th century. Newly established law schools are paving their way to high positions in global rankings.

### **3. Law schools at Catholic universities are more explicit about their Catholic mission in countries where the Catholic Church has been persecuted**

Catholic presence is more vibrant in the countries that were deprived of their Catholic tradition over the course of history. For example, in Poland, where the Catholic Church was under persecution during the Soviet regime. After the fall of communism, the state founded Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw and the KUL launched the faculty of law, canon law and administration. That is also seen in the example of Ukraine, where the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church was prohibited, and now the Ukrainian Catholic University strives to return human dignity, solidarity and other Christian values in training for a young generation of lawyers. That can also be seen in the example of Hungary, which faced religious limitations during the communist rule and now holds its Catholic mission strong. The same applies to Slovenia, where the Catholic Church has suffered a lot in the XX century and now tries to restore its presence through the foundation for the future Catholic university.

The bigger idea here is that countries that could not enjoy their Catholic tradition freely in the past today see it as their core value. Christian identity, reflected in the mission statements, have some space in the curriculum and research projects. On the other hand, law schools in countries where the Catholic faith was not under threat or pressure prefer to mention their connection with the Catholic in general terms (service for the society, common good, human dignity, etc.).

The percentage of Catholics also plays an important role. The societies with a high percentage of the Catholic population usually have stronger cooperation with the Vatican (concordats, treaties, etc.), which, in its turn, enhances the presence of the Catholic worldview in legal studies. That can be seen in Spain, Portugal and Italy.

### **4. Commitment to excellence, service-driven approach, and respect for human dignity are the core common values of the law schools in Catholic universities in Europe**

#### *Commitment to excellence*

Christianity by itself requires the person to do good, avoid sins, and strive to help others. However, it goes even beyond that. Catholic priest Jared Zimmerer states that Jesus also admonished us not to allow mediocrity in our lives, to set our feet higher and to strive for the maximum possible<sup>135</sup>.

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<sup>135</sup> Zimmerer, Jared. "The Catholicity of Excellence." Word on Fire, 6 Jan. 2022, [www.wordonfire.org/articles/fellows/the-catholicity-of-excellence/](http://www.wordonfire.org/articles/fellows/the-catholicity-of-excellence/).

Law schools in Catholic universities are focused on building such attitudes in law students' mindset. The University of Namur Faculty of Law places its training in a "perspective of supporting the student towards excellence"<sup>136</sup>, the University of Comillas Pontifical University refers to the excellence tradition in its mission<sup>137</sup>, and the University of Villanueva's methodology is based on the idea of academic excellence<sup>138</sup>. The University of Navarra created the Excellence program to give its bachelor's students the necessary skills to be leaders in their community with an ethical approach. In a program, coordinated by the Philosophy department, the students are exploring the social environment through a humanistic and ethical prism<sup>139</sup>. The Catholic Church also named excellence among its vision for the Catholic universities. Cardinal José Tolentino Mendonça emphasised that the Church expects the graduates of Catholic universities to be outstanding in learning, ready to shoulder society's heavier burdens, and to witness the faith to the world". It combines both being excellent as a university in its activity and nurturing excellence among its students so that they can be prominent leaders in their communities.

#### *Service-driven approach*

The mission of the law schools in Catholic universities is not only to qualify students for personal success but also to put the best values in its students so they would strive to bring change to society and contribute to the common good. And that is one of the biggest privileges that Catholic universities and their law schools have – the willingness to make this world a better place through its community.

That is often done through service learning projects. The initiative is getting institutionalised, and the best projects are awarded the Uniservitate Award<sup>140</sup>. For example, KU Leuven has a university-wide program, which is especially popular among law students – The Lived Experience of Imprisonment<sup>141</sup>. It is not limited only to law students, but half of the class taking it are law students and it is organized by the Institute for Criminology. The students reflect on what is considered good punishment and to what extent prison is a good punishment. As a result, the

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<sup>136</sup> *Des théories du droit à la pratique juridique* (no date) *Université de Namur*. Available at: <https://www.unamur.be/droit> (Accessed: 24 December 2023).

<sup>137</sup> *Tradición de Excelencia - Universidad Comillas* (no date) *COMILLAS*. Available at: <https://www.comillas.edu/tradicion-de-excelencia/> (Accessed: 24 December 2023).

<sup>138</sup> *Get to know us* (2023) *Universidad Villanueva*. Available at: <https://www.villanueva.edu/en/get-to-know-us/> (Accessed: 24 December 2023).

<sup>139</sup> (No date) *Excellence programme. School of Humanities and Social Sciences*. ... Available at: <https://en.unav.edu/web/programa-excellence> (Accessed: 24 December 2023).

<sup>140</sup> What is uniservitate? (2023) *Uniservitate*. Available at: <https://www.uniservitate.org/what-is-uniservitate/> (Accessed: 24 Dec. 2023).

<sup>141</sup> The lived experience of imprisonment (2023) *Uniservitate*. Available at: [https://www.uniservitate.org/featured\\_item/the-lived-experience-of-imprisonment/](https://www.uniservitate.org/featured_item/the-lived-experience-of-imprisonment/) (Accessed: 24 Dec. 2023).

students prepare texts, videos, articles, or presentations to present ideas on how to improve the conditions of the detention centres.

Another widely spread practice among law schools in Catholic universities is legal clinics. The service through legal clinics includes free legal aid to those in need, participating in street law activities (general civic and human rights education), preparing materials for the street law, etc. The Legal Clinic of UCU Law School could be a good example. It was started in 2017 to provide pro bono legal aid to the veterans of the Russian-Ukrainian war and to provide training for young people (mainly school graduates) on legal aspects of financial literacy. After the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, when one of the UCU campuses turned into a shelter for people escaping the atrocities of war, legal aid to internally displaced persons became a main focus. Afterwards, students joined the efforts of Ukrainian non-government organisations in documenting war crimes committed on the occupied territory. Also, the Legal Clinic started a collaboration with the national rehabilitation centre for wounded civilians and military service members to serve those who suffered the most from the war.

### *Human Dignity*

Catholic universities and their law schools directly refer to the concept of human dignity in their mission statements. For example, the Catholic University of Valencia identifies as a “community that contributes to the protection and development of human dignity”<sup>142</sup>. Francisco de Vitoria University states that its academic mission is based on the truth, in which they recognise the intrinsic dignity of each human being, open to and embracing the common good<sup>143</sup>. The Pontifical University of Salamanca aims to contribute to the protection and development of human dignity from a Christian conception of man<sup>144</sup>. In other cases, human dignity is envisioned through other values, such as integral human development (Catholic University of Lille)<sup>145</sup><sup>145</sup>, each person is the central character (Villanueva University)<sup>146</sup>, human rights (University of Navarra)<sup>147</sup>, and other values that derive from the concept of human dignity. Human dignity is the cornerstone for building an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect within the university community. As the foundation for key legal concepts regarding individuals and their rights, human dignity can serve as a way to bring the Christian narrative to legal studies and research.

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<sup>142</sup> *Universidad Católica de Valencia* (no date) UCV. Available at: <https://www.ucv.es/quienes-somos/identidad-catolica> (Accessed: 24 Dec. 2023).

<sup>143</sup> *About UFV* (no date b) UFV. Available at: <https://www.ufv.es/welcome-to-ufv-madrid/about-ufv/> (Accessed: 24 Dec. 2023).

<sup>144</sup> *Declaración de Identidad* (no date) UPSA. Available at: <https://www.upsa.es/la-universidad/declaracion-de-identidad> (Accessed: 24 Dec. 2023).

<sup>145</sup> *Valeurs* (no date) *Accueil*. Available at: <https://www.univ-catholille.fr/valeurs> (Accessed: 27 March 2024).

<sup>146</sup> *Mission, vision and values* (2021) *Universidad Villanueva*. Available at: <https://www.villanueva.edu/en/mission-vision-and-values/> (Accessed: 24 Dec. 2023).

<sup>147</sup> (No date a) *About the university. University of Navarra*. Available at: <https://en.unav.edu/about-the-university> (Accessed: 24 Dec. 2023).

### VIII. Conclusions

The first step of research on law schools in European Catholic universities gives the opportunity to map out the further directions and to put forward the hypotheses that can be either confirmed or refuted at the further stages.

1. The modern law schools in Catholic universities are a contemporary phenomenon that has no direct link to the legal studies in the medieval universities of Catholic Europe. The law schools no longer act as the cornerstones of the modern Catholic universities. They arise due to the profound state transformations, the change in the Catholic Church's role in society, and the related challenges. Since law schools are always about the university's impact in society and shaping the state agenda, the absence of legal studies in Catholic universities may indicate some distancing from the legal and political affairs of the country.

2. Despite the shared titles and declared values, the law schools in Catholic universities hardly constitute an integral phenomenon with shared identity in the academic landscape of Europe. Each law school itself defines what it means to be Catholic, factoring in a national context, university position, historical background, etc.

3. Traditionally, law schools are deeply rooted in national legal tradition and legal framework. However, a small number of Catholic law schools, law students, and law professors within one country does not give rise to a vibrant intellectual environment based on shared values. Therefore, enhancing cooperation and building a network between Catholic law schools has a big potential. Such cooperation can become a strong impulse for the advancement of Catholic intellectual tradition in law in general and a point for growth for each law school in particular. The joint research projects, academic events, and students and faculty mobility can be not only the fulfilment of the call to cooperate (*Ex Corde Ecclesiae*)<sup>148</sup> and practical implementation of the solidarity concept (*Fratelli Tutti*)<sup>149</sup>, but also an effective method to increase the international indicator, which is a weak link in the chain even for the most successful law schools in European Catholic universities.

The European unity stands on the common spaces: shared market, supranational human rights protection mechanism, shared belief in democracy and the rule of law. Christian values and Catholic intellectual tradition are promising foundations for building another common space, which has a lot to offer in the turbulent 21st century. So, why not?

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<sup>148</sup> John Paul II. *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*. Cardinal Newman Society, 1990.

<sup>149</sup> Francis, P. (2020) *Fratelli Tutti*. S.I.: Catholic Truth Society.

## TRUST REDUNDANT: ST JOHN HENRY NEWMAN AND WILLIAM JAMES ON THE EVICTION OF THE PERSON FROM PHILOSOPHY

Paul McHugh\*

**Abstract** If there are no persons, then trust between persons is redundant. Within modern philosophy and much contemporary philosophy the place of the person and the personal is often problematic. The prestige of mathematical and empirical investigation has elevated a disciplinary standard whose objectivity seems to require that the study of the person fall under its impersonal canons. St John Henry Newman and William James in different ways protested against this. Though James, Newman's younger contemporary, suspected an 'intellectualism' in Newman's approach to things of religious faith, there is some resonance between them, especially as regards relocating the person as central in philosophical, especially religious philosophical, investigation. This paper argues that both thinkers gave particular attention to the present experience of consciousness to draw conclusions at odds with epistemological and psychological ideas prevalent in their day and that Newman before James had already argued convincingly for reversing the eviction of the person from philosophy.

**Keywords** Person, Trust, Newman, James, Locke, Epistemology, Empiricism

**Résumé** S'il n'y a pas de personnes, la confiance entre les personnes est superflue. Dans la philosophie moderne et dans une grande partie de la philosophie contemporaine, la place de la personne et du personnel est souvent problématique. Le prestige de l'investigation mathématique et empirique a élevé une norme disciplinaire dont l'objectivité semble exiger que l'étude de la personne soit soumise à ses canons impersonnels. St John Henry Newman et William James ont protesté de différentes manières contre cette tendance. Bien que James, le plus jeune contemporain de Newman, ait soupçonné un « intellectualisme » dans l'approche de Newman des choses de la foi religieuse, il y a une certaine résonance entre eux, en particulier en ce qui concerne le fait de replacer la personne au centre de la recherche philosophique, en particulier de la recherche philosophique religieuse. Cet article soutient que les deux penseurs ont accordé une attention particulière à l'expérience présente de la conscience pour tirer des conclusions en désaccord avec les idées épistémologiques et psychologiques qui prévalaient à leur époque et que Newman, avant James, avait déjà défendu de manière convaincante l'idée d'inverser l'éviction de la personne de la philosophie.

**Mots clés** Personne, confiance, Newman, James, Locke, épistémologie, empirisme

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## Introduction

Two thinkers, St John Henry Newman and William James, though deeply divided by outlook nonetheless found common ground over the place of the person and the personal in the philosophy. By their different lights, they came to the view that the person, understood as a true agent among the causes and effects generally considered in nature, had been wrongly evicted from philosophy, and philosophy was much the poorer for it. Both Newman and James in their separate ways questioned the availability of the person as an empirical object of study. James had it that we know the meaning of ‘personal consciousness’ so long as we do not have the job of defining it, which latter is the ‘most difficult of philosophic tasks’<sup>1</sup> (James, 1890, p. 225). Newman, in his famous doctrine of the illative sense and in other places, defended the person as the starting point rather than the end point of enquiry. He wrote that our being with all its faculties ‘is a fact not admitting of question, all things being of necessity referred to it, not it to other things’<sup>2</sup> (Newman, 1903, p. 446-7).

In the mid to late nineteenth century, theirs was a minority view, set against an ascendant, reductive materialism that was making daily conquest of the cultural imagination by its apparent ministry to temporal needs and desires, by the new light it shed on old questions, by mysteries cleared up and fresh theoretical paths opened. The question would naturally occur: if a reductive empiricism had yielded so much success in the study of non-human nature, why would not it be equally availing in the study of human nature?

Neither Newman nor James was anti-science – quite the contrary. Newman greatly admired Francis Bacon as a pioneering empiricist, rejoicing that his approach had led to a way ‘whereby bodily discomforts and temporal wants are to be most effectually removed from the greatest number’<sup>3</sup> (Newman, 1907, p. 190). He was also critically open to the ‘Darwin theory’ when many about him were not. ‘Mr Darwin’s theory,’ Newman opined to a correspondent ‘need . . . not be atheistical, be it true or not; it may simply be suggesting a larger idea of Divine Prescience and Skill’<sup>4</sup> (Dessain & Gornall eds., 1973, p. 77). As for James, his cosmopolitan education and early studies in medicine and physiology meant that his mature turn to the philosophy of psychology was not prompted by a disdain for empirical science. He appreciated its method and felt humanity’s debt to science to be ‘literally boundless’<sup>5</sup> (James, 1897, p. 325).

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<sup>1</sup> William James, *The Principles of Psychology*, vol. 1 (New York: Henry Holt & Co, 1890), 225.

<sup>2</sup> J H Newman, *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*, (London: Longmans, 1903), 446–7. Hereafter *GA*.

<sup>3</sup> J H Newman, *The Idea of a University*, (London: Longmans, 1907), 190. Hereafter *Idea*.

<sup>4</sup> S Dessain & T Gornall SJ eds., *Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*, Vol. XXIV (Oxford: Clarendon, 1973), 77. Hereafter *LD XXIV*.

<sup>5</sup> William James, *The Will to Believe* (New York: Longmans, 1897), 325.



On the other hand, they both resisted the presumption that natural science is the final arbiter of what is true. Their attitude to the empirical sciences was one of appreciation rather than adoration. They mixed genuine praise with pointed caveat. For Newman, the laws of physics were not laws at all, rather formulae under which phenomena were conveniently represented<sup>6</sup> (Newman, 1903, p. 57). The Baconian empirical method was wonderful in its domain, but not fitted for what he called the mental and moral sciences<sup>7</sup> (Newman, 1903, p. 384) – that is, the sciences of the person. For James, science was characterized essentially by method rather than by ‘fixed belief’. And yet, he noted that a ‘fixed belief’ habitually attended the practice of the sciences of his day, namely ‘that the hidden order of nature is mechanical exclusively, and that non-mechanical categories are irrational ways of conceiving and explaining even such things as human life’<sup>8</sup> (James, 1897, p. 323-4).

What had led to a state of affairs by which the material success of a method, the empirical method, had required the sacrifice of the person? Why, as Newman and James in their different ways had asked, could not we acknowledge, celebrate, and enjoy scientific progress without falling on our knees to materialism and kindred theses? From their distinct premises, Newman’s addresses in 1850s Dublin and James’s lectures decades later at Harvard both contained a call for largeness of mind and a protest against the hardening of the intellectual arteries in those who presumed the march of the empirical way must be over territory once claimed by another metaphysic.

All this, as they had warned, made for the abolition of the person. The person argued away, what of God? And what of prayer, that gracious communication and infallible sign for James of a ‘living religion’<sup>9</sup> (James, 1917, p. 464)? Hearts alive to God, thought Newman, could trace in their days a providential strand even upon ‘a mutilated and defective evidence’<sup>10</sup> (Newman, 1909, p. 200). Break the thread of *I and Thou* and the fallout would be immense. Written mid-century, Matthew Arnold’s elegiac lines in ‘Dover Beach’<sup>11</sup> (Arnold, 1878, p. 164-5) coupled the ‘melancholy, long, withdrawing roar’ of the sea of faith with a new and frightening loneliness in a disenchanted universe, where lay about us ‘drear and naked shingles of the world’, a place where prayer was not heard and has never been valid.

But for every Arnold, caught in an epochal twilight, there was another in thrall to a future rational, powerful, and mechanical, and someone else with an eye for profit and the commodification of the poor, and still another to provide a philosophy for all these new things. Writing later in the same decade, the Scottish essayist Thomas Carlyle, when surveying the

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<sup>6</sup> Cf. GA, 57.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. GA, 384.

<sup>8</sup> William James, *The Will to Believe*, 323–4.

<sup>9</sup> William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York: Longmans, 1917), 464.

<sup>10</sup> J H Newman, *Fifteen Sermons preached before the University of Oxford*, (London: Longmans, 1909), 200. Hereafter US.

<sup>11</sup> Matthew Arnold, *Selected Poems of Matthew Arnold* (London: Macmillan, 1878), 164–5.

sciences of his day, noted the decay in Europe of the ‘Metaphysical and Moral Sciences’ before the rise of the Physical Sciences ‘cultivated exclusively on mechanical principles’<sup>12</sup> (Carlyle, 1899, p. 66). Those shingles ‘drear and naked’ for Arnold gleamed with hard promise for others. Shone by the spent sea of faith, their time had come. And so against Arnold’s lyric of loss and uncertainty there was another that sang the morning of the material, capturing imaginations by an air of inevitable progress and the brute beauty of its metaphors. Thence could arise an intellectual vision unclouded by conflict industrial, mechanistic, and cataclysmic of a century to come.

Not all were captured or converted. We do not know quite what it was in James’s alchemy that set him against the intellectual mainstream. He was from a wealthy and high-achieving New England family. His father broke from Presbyterian roots to refashion himself as a Swedenborgian. Perhaps influenced by that sect’s preoccupation with visions, mysticism and revelations, his eldest son wanted to be open to spiritual phenomena uncensored by scientific prejudice and to study them dispassionately and sympathetically according to an avowed pragmatism. His would be a genuinely scientific, rather than reductive, approach. Whilst being purely methodological, it would be open to all there might be of the spiritual and mystical phenomena barred at the gate by the ‘fixed belief’ of a more reductive science. With Newman, though, we have a clearer idea of his motivations. From the early days of his intellectual career, he had set his face against treating the things of the person and the things of faith as though entirely available to the principles and methods of the experimental sciences. As a young Oxford don preaching at the University church, he warned of ‘the usurpation of Reason in morals and religion’<sup>13</sup> (Newman, 1909, p. 67-8). By this he meant a baleful tendency operating under the name of ‘Reason’ which would presume to treat religion and morals solely by secular lights.

Newman noted this tendency all about him in 1830s England, a zeal to apply impersonal solutions on problems whose cause and cure lodged in the person – ‘[h]ence political economy is to supersede morality... hence we are promised laws which shall *prevent* bribery and corruption’<sup>14</sup> (Ker & Gornall eds., 1979, p. 90). Prominent thinkers and politicians such as Robert Peel and Lord Brougham saw in science and literature a cure for the immorality of the lower classes. A steady immersion in these would be the ‘parent of virtue’ and the ‘nurse of religion’<sup>15</sup>. Newman was alarmed by ‘the fashion of the day to consider the human mind as a machine and to think that education will do any thing for it’<sup>16</sup> (Ker & Gornall eds., 1979, p. 91). Two decades on, in the midst of a mid-19<sup>th</sup> century information age, he worried that the proliferation of printed information

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<sup>12</sup> Thomas Carlyle, *The Works of Thomas Carlyle*, Vol. 6 (London: Chapman & Hall, 1899), 66.

<sup>13</sup> *US*, 67–8.

<sup>14</sup> I Ker & T Gornall SJ eds., *Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*, Vol. III (Oxford: Clarendon, 1979), 90. Hereafter *LD III*.

<sup>15</sup> G Tracy ed., *Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*, Vol. VIII (Oxford: Clarendon, 1999), 534. Hereafter *LD VIII*.

<sup>16</sup> *LD III*, 91.

would impart a ‘process feel’ to education in which ‘[t]here is to be nothing individual’<sup>17</sup> (Newman, 1907, p. 142). He conveyed his concern in lines like ‘[w]hat the steam engine does with matter, the printing press is to do with mind’<sup>18</sup> (Newman, 1907, p. 143). What is there of a personal ‘taking hold’ of one’s convictions when they are presented simply as the automatic impress of impersonal evidence on a mind passive before it?

The great mistake was to believe that one could be somewhere entirely detached from human contexts to judge of things not only deeply human but also that required a human eye to weigh them. Standing apart from logic, mathematics and natural science were subjects whose truths were more recondite – such as history, ethics, metaphysics, and theology. These must rely in good measure on ‘moral proof’<sup>19</sup> (Newman, 1909, p. 112). Their truths and lessons must be discerned, for they do not rest on the surface. This calls on the whole person – their intellect, experience, learning, judgment – and in which ‘antecedent probability may have a real weight and cogency which it cannot have in experimental science’<sup>20</sup> (Newman, 1909, p. 112). To gain depth in religious or moral understanding, one had to use principles connatural with them, not least, that persons are fundamental actors – causes *sui generis*. Hence a preparation of the heart and a proper moral disposition were of inestimable importance if one were to receive religious and moral truth aright. Starting points awry, there could never be a sound weighing in these matters. Colouring things in apocalyptic tones, the young Newman had seen in this something in preparation for centuries, a vaunting rationalism which would occupy the ‘seat in the temple of God, as His representative,’<sup>21</sup> (Newman, 1909, 68) if it could.

It would be easy to style Newman’s as a romantic reaction to a scientific industrialism imposing on soft shires the hard lines and corners of a built environment – as though what was delicately and indefinably human had once found safe lodging in the infinite halftones of remembered meadows now lost under mills. But neither Newman nor James was at odds with the hard truths of a dawning age. Their protest was not against the thump of pistons or clatter of coal. Newman lived in a time of railways and steamboats, of wondrous new constructions of bridges, roads, and tunnels. He calmly ventured the safety of his journeys on the enduring properties of iron, steel, and steam. As for James, his life saw in and out the entire second industrial revolution in the USA, when rail track connected the cities and spanned the continent, when massive mechanization, startling economic growth and an urbanized, increasingly imported workforce gave shape to the America we know today.

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<sup>17</sup> *Idea*, 142.

<sup>18</sup> *Idea*, 143.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. J H Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, (London: Longmans, 1909), 112. Hereafter *Dev*.

<sup>20</sup> *Dev*, 112.

<sup>21</sup> *US*, 68.

## The Quarrel

Their quarrel was with a philosophy. Newman attacked it on an epistemology front, James more on a philosophy of psychology front. Their target was a philosophical tendency traceable in some measure to a thinker they both had time for, John Locke. Newman praised him in words comical in our hearing but presumably fair praise in a Victorian's, in one work calling him 'grave and manly'<sup>22</sup> (Newman, 1907, p. 319) and in another attributing to him a 'manly simplicity of mind'<sup>23</sup> (Newman, 1903, p. 162). James, for his part, numbered Locke in an honoured tradition to which he claimed his own pragmatism was heir, that is, of English and Scottish empiricism<sup>24</sup> (James, 1899, 443-4).

On the other hand, James castigated Locke, Hume, and others for bequeathing to philosophy and psychology a view of mental operation necessarily founded on elemental entities, simple ideas, impressions, qualities or the like. 'No one', said James 'ever had a simple sensation by itself'<sup>25</sup> (James, 1890, p. 224). It is a fundamental and crass mistake, thought James, to identify consciousness with neat abstractions about it. And here we may reflect on the mystery of how a fertile and generous mind such as James's could be led to denounce Newman under a charge of 'intellectualism'<sup>26</sup> (James, 1917, p. 434-5) – for James's thesis was more generally and more penetratingly taken up by Newman before him.

Like James, Newman attended to the fundamental distinction between the living mind and those abstractions about it which must necessarily be after-the-fact. Reasoning is a 'living, spontaneous energy within us'<sup>27</sup> (Newman, 1909, p. 257) for which there is neither art<sup>28</sup> nor formula nor rule by which it can be brought under sufficient concept. The reason for this is simple and profound. Reasoning must go before the very enquiry which would purport to capture it under concept. To nail the essence of reasoning demands a substantive answer to 'what is the reasoning by which I now try to answer questions like this'? It would require 'a thought from nowhere', a radical detachment so that one can be a real-time spectator of one's own mental life. As James observed:

*[w]hether anywhere in the room there be a mere thought, which is nobody's thought, we have no means of ascertaining ... [t]he only states of consciousness that we naturally deal with are found in personal consciousnesses, minds, selves, concrete particular I's and you's.*<sup>29</sup> (James, 1890, p. 226)

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<sup>22</sup> *Idea*, 319.

<sup>23</sup> *GA*, 162.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, 443–4.

<sup>25</sup> William James, *The Principles of Psychology*, Vol. 1, 224.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, 434–5.

<sup>27</sup> *US*, 257.

<sup>28</sup> When Newman says that living reasoning is not an 'art', he means 'art' in the sense of a skill based on formulaic principles and procedures that could be set down on paper.

<sup>29</sup> William James, *The Principles of Psychology*, Vol. 1, 226.

Anticipating this was Newman in his oft-quoted remark ‘egotism is true modesty’<sup>30</sup> (Newman, 1903, 384-5). For he was speaking of enquiries into the mental and moral self. Since there are no abstracted selves, I can only start from the self I am. It seems as if the elementary psychic fact were not thought or this thought or that thought, but *my* thinking, every thought being, as it were, owned.

One tenet of Locke’s came in for particular criticism from Newman. Locke’s ‘ethic of belief’ – as it was later called – denied that we should call ‘knowledge’ anything not intuitive, demonstrative, or immediately present to sense (in descending order of knowledge). All else was consigned to probability or, worse, to ‘enthusiasm’. That Locke packaged this in his *Essay*<sup>31</sup> (Locke, 1997) with much that seemed sane, perspicuous, and generous-minded accounted for its enduring influence, despite initial objections from such as Berkeley and Leibniz. In Newman’s day and beyond, Locke still stood for good sense and sound thinking<sup>32</sup>. At first blush, does not it stand to reason that we should not call *knowledge* what lacks proper credentials? To claim something as knowledge without full comprehension and full proof of the object was, especially in religion, a mark of that intellectual folly Locke called ‘enthusiasm’<sup>33</sup> (Locke, 1997, IV.xix).

Newman objected: in naming our knowing thus restrictively, Locke was shutting off far too much of what we may reasonably hold as knowledge. I know I have parents though I have no memory of my birth; I know Britain is an island though I have never circumnavigated it; I know I shall die someday though I do not know the future; I know Cairo is a great city in Egypt though I have never been there. Locke’s thesis might sound reasonable in the laboratory of the mind but would not work for a day out in the field of life.

Of course, the demand for a ground to one’s knowledge, one’s ‘true belief with an *account*’, goes back to Plato (for example, his *Theaetetus*). And perhaps as in many of Plato’s great enquiries, the question has as much potential to gather as to scatter. What is the ‘account’ that justifies? Is the ‘account’ necessarily a watertight verbal formula, such as Locke would lay down? Or is it, as Newman would hold, of concrete knowledge, like a ‘cumulation of probabilities . . . too fine to avail

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<sup>30</sup> GA, 384–5.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, (London: Penguin, 1997).

<sup>32</sup> Walter Mayers, Newman’s boyhood tutor, had commended a book to Newman for its being comparable to the “days of Locke for sound conclusive reasoning” (LD I, 34). Many decades on, Andrew Fairbairn, a Scottish theologian and Principal of Mansfield College, Oxford, attacked Newman for his *Grammar of Assent*, citing among other things “his criticism of Locke” as one of the traits of a sceptical work (cf. A M Fairbairn, “Catholicism and Religious Thought”, *The Contemporary Review*, May 1885, <http://www.newmanreader.org/works/error/fairbairn1.html>).

<sup>33</sup> Cf. John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Book IV, Chapter xix.

separately, too subtle and circuitous to be convertible into syllogisms<sup>34</sup> (Newman, 1903, p. 288)? In other words, an appeal to an experience of coming to know in the concrete backed by what Newman called elsewhere the ‘common voice’<sup>35</sup> (Newman, 1903, p. 344).

Newman’s very fine philosophical antenna discerned in Lockean epistemology the seeds of depersonalization and scientific atheism. For it seems implicit in Locke’s thinking not just a claim to know, but a claim to know what *knowing* essentially is. I might know this cup is on the table or that book is on the shelf. How by this or a derivative way could I come to know what knowing is? How can I directly *know* as a conceptual object that knowing by which I know anything at all? And although the philosophical difficulties of such a claim were hinted at by thinkers again as far back as Plato (whose *Charmides* dwelt a little on questions like this), it escaped many a mind in Newman’s time, whose intellectual imaginations were more taken by its air of soundness and objectivity. But once you hold that human knowing can be essentially known, you welcome into the room a thought that can be nobody’s thought. As something no human mind can originate, it must be fallen in with as a *given* before we even begin our thinking.

This ‘given’ wore the air of something the upshot of sophisticated enquiry – a conclusion rather than the presumption it more truly was. This breezy certainty taken to the study of the mind was replicated in the study of nature. Hence the ‘fixed belief’<sup>36</sup> (James, 1897, p. 324), as James observed, of a fundamental mechanical nature to reality, often presumed by scientists but not warranted by science. For Newman, it was manifest, for example, in the presumption of ‘necessary uniformity in the action of the laws of nature’<sup>37</sup> (Newman, 1903, p. 70). By his ethic of belief, Locke was touting epistemological hygiene before the messy experiential feel of coming to know anything. Inevitably, this would work to upgrade the claims of science and downgrade the personal claim to know in common workaday matters, the suppression of what Robert Pasnau called a ‘social epistemology’<sup>38</sup> (Pasnau, 2010, p. 27-31), wherein what people ordinarily said they *know* about this or that still counted as knowledge ‘proper’. The upshot was the privileging of a knowledge paradigm which claimed universality and necessity along with a justification deficit for all that we thought we knew which nonetheless could not meet such a high standard. It was

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<sup>34</sup> GA, 288.

<sup>35</sup> GA, 344.

<sup>36</sup> W James, *The Will to Believe*, 324.

<sup>37</sup> GA, 70 and cf. GA, 70–1. Take Newman’s example of the small variances in the earth’s orbit. What explains these? We could assume a relation between “falling bodies on earth” and attractions between “cosmical bodies”. Falling bodies on earth and tiny orbital perturbations (with appropriate sensory augmentation) can be experienced. Assuming uniformity of nature gives a desirable notional connection for what is an “absence of experience”.

<sup>38</sup> See R Pasnau, ‘Medieval Social Epistemology: Scientia for Mere Mortals’, *Episteme*, Vol. 7, Issue 01 (February 2010): 27–31.

an exchange in which an embedded epistemic vantage was in order of precedence put second to a theoretic vantage.

### A Faustian Exchange

It was a Faustian exchange. What did it promise? In modern philosophy, there was perhaps the sense of great gain, a rush of exhilaration in the escape velocity from the raddled, save-the-appearances, unfit-for-purpose, authority-bound Aristotelian religious world. The writings of Hobbes and Locke are thick with an emancipatory elation<sup>39</sup>. A new moral source was to be found in cultivating a hermeneutic of suspicion to received opinion, a certain ‘manliness’ in testing for oneself the worth of a prior thesis. This continued to power the conviction of leading thinkers for generations after, so much that W K Clifford’s 19<sup>th</sup> Century paean to the Lockean way – that it is ‘always and everywhere wrong to believe something on insufficient evidence’<sup>40</sup> (Feinberg & Shafer-Landau eds., 2017, p. 155) – is still bright with its originary glow.

What did it demand? In short, the eviction-by-deconstruction of the person from philosophy. The powerful new intellectual imagination of the early moderns released the theoretic eye to range over all things, reordering them to univocity. It required a scientific imagination to become scientific – hardened before all it surveyed, stretching, and chopping to its Procrustean paradigm. Unreceptive and incurious outside its sphere and above all hostile to *mystery*. Mystery confronted the post-Lockean intellectual as unbecoming for a rational mind, demanding a recasting to something congenial to its methodology.

The confidence of the early moderns like Locke, who flew rather than fell out of Aristotelian orbit, fired intellectual imaginations long after. It gave an imaginal shape to that emancipation-by-reason as a resolving of myriad complexities to a few fundamentals. Hume, for example, was inspired by Newton’s elegant distillation of cosmic paths to simple laws<sup>41</sup>. Grand unifying theories like Newton’s projected along with themselves a vision of this conquest of mystery by reason. The apparent power of mathematical and scientific theory to bring a hitherto complex universe to satisfying order would eventually tempt the search for grand unifying concepts which could bring the ‘messily human’ aspects of life into order. Like Alexander hungering for new conquests, where

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<sup>39</sup> See Charles Taylor, “Challenging Issues About The Secular Age” in *Modern Theology*, 26:3 (July 2010): 404–416. He writes on the social imaginary of the “immanent frame” that he thinks the child of Latin Christendom.

<sup>40</sup> W K Clifford, “The Ethics of Belief”, in Joel Feinberg and Russ Shafer-Landau, eds., *Reason and Responsibility: Readings in Some Basic Problems of Philosophy*, 16th edition (Boston: Cengage, 2017), 155.

<sup>41</sup> Hume wrote his *Treatise* and his later *Enquiry into Human Understanding* charged by the idea of introducing the experimental method into the study of human nature and to attain a “science of human nature” (D Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1963), 5). His desire, inspired by Newton’s methodology, was that “the only solid foundation . . . to this science of human nature] . . . be laid on experience and observation” (D Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1896), xx, [http://oll-resources.s3.amazonaws.com/titles/342/0213\\_Bk.pdf](http://oll-resources.s3.amazonaws.com/titles/342/0213_Bk.pdf)).

could that new intellectual imagination go now powered by the conviction that the ‘fundamental conceptions of truth have already been found by science’<sup>42</sup> (James, 1897, p. 53)? Well, to the mystery of the person. To the *self* as that most desirable conquest for the pride of the scientist.

In Newman’s day, Jeremy Bentham’s *Principles of Morals and Legislation*, in asserting a hedonic foundation to morality, is typical of this endeavour. For him, moral science entirely resolved to the natural motors of pain and pleasure. ‘Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain, and pleasure. It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do, as well as to determine what we shall do’<sup>43</sup> (Bentham, 1889, p. 1). For such a mind, it presumably made no sense to dwell on occult matters of ‘person’, ‘volition’ and ‘conscience’, since these seem to disappear under the rationalist gaze like mist before sunlight. The distinction so vigorously defended by Newman – between the empirical sciences and the mental and moral sciences – was simply dissolved in the search for answers whose power was alleged on their simplicity and range.

What a ‘gain’ to explain human phenomena without need of that hypothesis, the person! In *Idea*, Newman remarked on the creeping assault on the person as a fit object for higher study. This tendency would be remorselessly towards the abolition of the person. How would this be effected? By marginalizing personal agency and volition, by passing over them in silence and ultimately dissolving them into physical causation. Proceed from an *a priori* view of things philosophically and one may ‘ignore so influential a being as man’<sup>44</sup> (Newman, 1907, p. 53). And so, what was at first respectfully quarantined is then discarded as a proper agent in the material world: ‘a professor is found, more hardy than his brethren... who takes on him... to pronounce the influence of mind in the visible world a superstition’<sup>45</sup> (Newman, 1907, 56).

This free-ranging eye could thereby gain a certain elation in the conviction of clearing up the ‘mystery of the person’. But this would come at the price of rendering persons as atoms in a depersonalized scape, their personal canons discarded, their former certitudes downgraded to probabilities. In his philosophical musings, Newman complained: ‘Hitherto a man was allowed to believe till it was logically brought home to him that he ought not to believe: but now it seems

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<sup>42</sup> As James described the hubristic intellectual atmosphere in the Harvard of his day. See William James, *The Will to Believe*, 53: “In this very University [Harvard], accordingly, I have heard more than one teacher say that all the fundamental conceptions of truth have already been found by science, and that the future has only the details of the picture to fill in. But the slightest reflection on the real conditions will suffice to show how barbaric such notions are.”

<sup>43</sup> J Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1889), 1, [https://books.google.co.uk/books/about/An\\_Introduction\\_to\\_the\\_Principles\\_of\\_Mor.html?id=NhksAAAAIAAJ&printsec=froncover&source=kp\\_read\\_button&redir\\_esc=y](https://books.google.co.uk/books/about/An_Introduction_to_the_Principles_of_Mor.html?id=NhksAAAAIAAJ&printsec=froncover&source=kp_read_button&redir_esc=y).

<sup>44</sup> *Idea*, 53.

<sup>45</sup> *Idea*, 56.



tacitly to be considered that a man has no liberty to believe, till it has been brought home to him in a rational form that ... he has a right to do so...'<sup>46</sup> (Newman, 1976, p. 84).

Like a great glacier crushing the contours of an older landscape, this new intellectual imagination seemed to press down on older forms of understanding, revered salients frozen, cracked and crushed beneath. Terms equivalent to reason, certainty, knowledge, cause, and so on were indeed rescued from the intellectual rubble of scholasticism. But, having lost their place in an abandoned medieval synthesis, they became susceptible to fresh connotations commodious to one's convictions or in disparagement of another's. Despite the efforts of early moderns such as Hobbes and Locke to 'fix' the meaning of certain words, the capacity of key terms to become loaded rhetorically could work new and enduring mischief. Newman, in his last major intellectual clash<sup>47</sup>, found himself labelled a sceptic upon an understanding of 'reason' so broad against his own pointed use as to make any attempt at rebuttal like fencing with the fog.

And since this was a Faustian exchange, it prepared for the emancipation and desolation of the ages that followed. We become strangely vulnerable in the new power of our knowing. Because of this, the character of Newman's and James's intellectual age mixed unbounded confidence with profound anxiety. Like Jack London's character who ignored warnings and hiked through freezing Yukon forest to his slow death, the new intellect is slowly shivered to pieces in epistemic territory out of which it has frozen itself. It has been betrayed by its own scientific overconfidence. 'No!' said James, 'our science is a drop, our ignorance a sea'<sup>48</sup> (James, 1897, p. 54).

It seems, then, that there was a hardness to which Newman and James objected. Not of material, iron, steel, stone, rather the hardness of a *word*, a proposition that would purport to be final, whose truth necessarily went behind and before, that has never needed someone to utter it, and that must inevitably frame our reasoning<sup>49</sup>. By this word, progressive minds would already know the nature of any object of enquiry – geological, astronomical, physiological, personal, or what have you – that might come before them insofar as the object, whatever it might be, must be presumed to have a nature amenable to its scrutiny. There was to be nothing in the universe but was analysis-friendly, methodologically docile, grooved for exhaustive decomposition – merely awaiting the emancipated knower and their analytical instruments. There was nothing in the universe invincibly analogue before their methodologies. Whether considering non-human or

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<sup>46</sup> J D Holmes ed., *The Theological Papers of John Henry Newman on Faith and Certainty*, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1976), 84. Hereafter *TP* i.

<sup>47</sup> With A M Fairbairn (1838-1912), a Scottish theologian and first principal of Mansfield College, Oxford.

<sup>48</sup> W James, *The Will to Believe*, 54.

<sup>49</sup> James offers an example of such a proposition: 'the hidden order of nature is mechanical exclusively, and ... non-mechanical categories are irrational ways of conceiving and explaining even such things as human life' (W James, *The Will to Believe*, 324).

human phenomena, all reality was pre-digitized down to kinds of fundamental entities congenial to analysis. There was implicit subscription to what Ray Monk called ‘the view that every intelligible question has either a scientific solution or no solution at all’<sup>50</sup> (Monk, 1999). Purporting as a necessary proposition reached by self-discarding logical steps, it worked on the imagination rather than reason. In the end, the proposition inveigled as rational and convinced as oracle.

Both Newman and James in their different ways questioned that *a priori* desire for crisp, reductive analysis in its tendency to put a Procrustean demand on the matter under study so that it should always be frameable for that detached enquiry, even when it did violence to the subject matter, such as, for example, the subject of the human person. To vary the metaphor: we could ask why should every aspect of reality be ‘easy peel’ for logical or empirical analysis? Might it not say something about the enquirer rather than the object of enquiry that it is presumed to be so? That someone finds the measurable always meaningful is no warrant for the assumption that the meaningful is always measurable. It could amount to the triumph of clarity over truth. The assumption once granted, there can arise the breezy, dispassionate objectivity of the expert in human sciences, evincing detachment from, essential knowledge of and predictive power over what hitherto had seemed all too messily human. Like the rest of nature, the mysteries of the person must yield to the final, absolute, and univocal gaze of the empirical sciences.

### **The Importance of Personal Knowing**

Both Newman and James might with some justice be called radical empiricists in their preparedness to treat empirical things empirically and without prejudice to let experience speak to them in all its particularity, and thus determine the methods by which it might be investigated. As Newman argued, vastly the greater part of life – human affairs, politics, aesthetics<sup>51</sup>, ethics, religion – is not congenial to the analysis of the scientist, mathematician, or logician. James echoes Newman when he maintained that such taken-for-granted ways of personal knowing are ‘outside of well-drilled scientific circles, the dominant forms of thought’<sup>52</sup> (James, 1897, p. 324).

Personal knowing, reasoning as the living stream of thought (James) or as a living spontaneous energy (Newman), was not epistemologically sterile simply by being analytically averse. One of Newman’s signal epistemological doctrines is summed up in the remark: ‘all men have a reason,

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<sup>50</sup> R Monk, “Wittgenstein’s forgotten lesson”, in *Prospect*, July 1999, (online) available at <https://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/regulars/55561/wittgensteins-forgotten-lesson> (accessed 01/04/2024).

<sup>51</sup> Wittgenstein pondered: “What is valuable in a Beethoven sonata?” He said he would reject any explanation “not because the explanation was false but because it was an *explanation*.” (cited in R Monk, *Ludwig Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius*, (London: Vintage Books, 1991), 305).

<sup>52</sup> William James, *The Will to Believe*, 324.

but not all men can give a reason'<sup>53</sup> (Newman, 1909, p. 259). That is, the accuracy of human judgment is often attended by an incommunicability. In acts of genius as much as in acts of common sense, a person may 'see the truth, but they do not know how they see it'<sup>54</sup> (Newman, 1909, p. 380). He offered further examples: a 'peasant who is weather-wise' and yet is 'unable to assign intelligible reasons why he thinks it will be fine to-morrow'<sup>55</sup> (Newman, 1909, p. 332); a new judge should 'lay down the law boldly, but never give his reasons, for his decision was likely to be right, but his reasons sure to be unsatisfactory'<sup>56</sup> (Newman, 1903, p. 303); and an expert climber who sees a way to ascend but cannot convey it.

The 'energy', then, of our living reason may be spontaneous but it is not spurious. The personal reasoning that leads to judgment 'is too keen and manifold, its sources are too remote and hidden . . . to admit of the trammels of any language'<sup>57</sup> (Newman, 1903, p. 284). 'Scientific philosophers' might disparage 'personal knowing' in theory, but they have to run with it in practice. Banished through the front door, it must be readmitted through the back. In a long and friendly critical interchange with his friend William Froude (something of a devout Lockean), Newman wrote: 'I certainly do think that scientific philosophers must, if they are fair, confess too, that there are truths of which they are certain, tho' they are not logically proved'<sup>58</sup> (Dessain & Gornall eds., 1976, p. 115).

Given all this, we can see why Newman fixed on *assent* – personal 'ownership' by an act of will – as key in his epistemological rearguard against Locke.

*'They [his previous efforts against Locke] were like attempts to get into a labyrinth, or to find the weak point in the defences of a fortified place. I could not get on, and found myself turned back, utterly baffled . . . At last, when I was up at Glion over the Lake of Geneva, it struck me: 'You are wrong in beginning with certitude—certitude is only a kind of assent—you should begin with contrasting assent and inference.' On that hint I spoke, finding it a key to my own ideas.'*<sup>59</sup> (Ward, 1912, p. 278)

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<sup>53</sup> *US*, 259.

<sup>54</sup> *US*, 380.

<sup>55</sup> *US*, 332.

<sup>56</sup> *GA*, 303.

<sup>57</sup> *GA*, 284. Other thinkers have pondered on this ineffable fine-tuning. Ludwig Wittgenstein offered an example about reading the expression of another, say, distinguishing a real look of affection from a pretended one. The distinction relies on imponderable evidence of "subtleties of glance, of gesture, of tone" (L Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, tr. G E M Anscombe, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1953), §360) that quite escape description.

<sup>58</sup> C S Dessain & T Gornall SJ eds., *Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*, Vol. XXIX, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1976), 115. Hereafter *LD* XXIX.

<sup>59</sup> J H Newman, journal memorandum, October 30, 1870, cited in Wilfred Ward, *The Life of John Henry Cardinal Newman*, vol. 2 (London: Longmans, 1912), 278.

Whether in matters of faith or in ordinary contingent matter<sup>60</sup>, many of his deepest concerns turned on this. By it he resisted that tendency in Victorian intellectualism to sideline a person's coming to judgment in favour of an automatic epistemological impress of 'evidence' on a mind passive before it. One reason for his suspicion of Paleyan physical theology was an alleged denaturing of religious faith by leaving no active space for 'I' in 'I believe'. 'Evidence', in this view, should work on the mind irrespective of that mind's moral preparation. I am, as it were, passively inducted into belief simply by the 'evidence'. Coming to faith would then be a procedural upshot of ratiocination – 'that we make up our minds by Reason without Faith, and then we proceed to adore and to obey by Faith apart from Reason'<sup>61</sup> (Newman, 1909, p. 182). He developed this critique effectively to argue whether in regard to education, religion or epistemology, the closing of the space that would shut out the 'I' of 'I learn' or the 'I' of 'I believe' also bars the 'I' of 'I know'.

Moved by the same concern, Newman rejected the move by some philosophers to go from antecedent probability to philosophical necessity. It made redundant the witness of constant personal experience. I might expect the sun to rise tomorrow, but it is a far different thing to assume this or any physical law as a law of necessity. I am certain I shall die, says Newman, but not because of some necessary 'law of death'<sup>62</sup> (Newman, 1903, p. 299). If we find things generally to be so, we do not glimpse them as 'necessary laws'. Our aspect on them is and remains an aspect of their generality rather than of their necessity. 'Generality' is something we can ascribe to past things without presumption of the future. Writing to William Froude, Newman echoes his remarks in the *Grammar*: '[t]here are philosophers who teach an invariable uniformity in the laws of nature; I do not see on what ground of experience or reason that they can take up this position'<sup>63</sup> (Dessain & Gornall eds., 1976, p. 113).

Yet Newman and James in their different ways were confronting the power of an intellectual imagination that projected a cosmic order too beautiful to be broken. Small wonder that things like miracles became problematic – '[i]magination' Newman noted, 'is the basis of Hume's argument against miracles'<sup>64</sup> (Holmes ed., 1976, p. 47). As James commented: "Science' in many minds is genuinely taking the place of a religion. Where this is so, the scientist treats the 'Laws of Nature' as objective facts to be revered'<sup>65</sup> (James, 1917, p. 57). To think that to be properly scientific one ought to go on a metaphysical 'fixed order' of 'necessary laws' betrayed minds captive

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<sup>60</sup> Cf. the priest in Newman's novel *Loss and Gain* who answers Charles Reding's question about what is to make a person believe: "What is to make him believe! the *will*, his *will*." (J H Newman, *Loss and Gain*, (London: Burns, 1848), 342. Hereafter *LG*).

<sup>61</sup> *US*, 182.

<sup>62</sup> *GA*, 299.

<sup>63</sup> *LD XXIX*, 113 and cf. *GA*, 70.

<sup>64</sup> *TP* i, 47.

<sup>65</sup> W James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, 57.

to an analytic paradigm of reason which exchanged that experiential holistic apprehension (*nous*) which gives first principles to procedural reason (*episteme*) for the presumption that all subject matters were ‘analysis-friendly’.

Newman showed his intellectual formation in a world before academic specialisms could cut intellectual paths so deeply grooved as to confine a career effectively within it. He never lost the intellectual holism of the old school. He was prepared to discern fundamental principles in different aspects of human activity and experience – in literature, morality, history, religion, for example – whose warrant was in their responding to life rather than to analytic paradigm. He contested the ‘triumph’ of *episteme* over *nous*, of concluding rightly over drawing right conclusions<sup>66</sup>. He questioned the privileging of procedural reason over that of the acquisition of true first principles. It is the person who must weigh.

### **In Contemporary Thought**

For all the challenge of different philosophical movements since, this intellectual imagination is still very much with us. The ‘ideal optimism’<sup>67</sup> (Newman, 1903, p. 350) which Newman associated with the School of Locke lives and breathes in Locke’s latter-day disciples. We live in times when optimism and belief in inevitable progress, the very signature of a rationalist metaphysic, too often attend a western intellectual approach to questions of the person, culture, religion and much else. Central in this worldview is the image of the scientist as a neutral applier of powerful methodologies. Alongside this a philosophical atmosphere imbuing a mind with the conviction that there is nothing beyond the compass of logical or empirical methods. Whether Polanyi was right to allege ‘greater intellectual satisfaction’<sup>68</sup> (Polanyi, 2002, p. 3-4) as the driving motive of Copernicus in mooted his heliocentric thesis, the image of the scientist by definition a dispassionate, detached enquirer before all subject matters, standing apart from and over the object of study, should arouse suspicion. This especially applies when the object of study is the *self*. The completely analysable self is the completely dismissible self.

For Newman as for his mentor in philosophy, Aristotle, it is the mark of an untrained mind<sup>69</sup> to assume the clarity and control we feel logic or experimental science gives to us should thereby determine them to be pre-eminent in all fields of enquiry. ‘In old times,’ Newman commented ‘the mason’s rule which was in use at Lesbos was, according to Aristotle, not of wood or iron, but of lead, so as to allow of its adjustment to the uneven surface of the stones brought together for the

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<sup>66</sup> Cf. *LD*, VIII, 556.

<sup>67</sup> *GA*, 350.

<sup>68</sup> M. Polanyi, *Personal knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 2002), 3-4.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics* (London: Penguin Classics, 2004), I.vii.

work'<sup>70</sup> (Newman, 1903, p. 355). Logic has its place. In a mind disengaged from the concrete, logic has ethereal sway. 'While we talk logic', Newman says, 'we are unanswerable'<sup>71</sup> (Newman, 1903, p. 268). Yet the clarity logic affords is at the price of being distanced from the concrete. And granting that the empirical sciences are built on the facts that sense brings before us, it would be irrational to 'trust to anything but sense in a matter of sense'<sup>72</sup> (Newman, 1909, p. 111).

In the study of the self – the 'mental and moral sciences' – formal inference (strict logic) and experimental science little avail. As mentioned above, we must fall back on the personal weight and cogency antecedent probability might offer in the construction of our 'moral proof'<sup>73</sup>. Newman's genius lies in his most precise treatment of the necessary imprecision attending our attempted analysis of the mind. His signal doctrines on the mind flowed from a capacity for interrogating things as they present in the messiness of 'real-time'. Among these doctrines: the true modesty of egotism<sup>74</sup> in the study of self, the relegation of logic to suggesting promising and unpromising enquiry routes, the radical incapacity of verbal argument to reach truth in concrete matter (only the truth-like), the supremacy of a person's mind – that organon 'delicate, versatile, and elastic'<sup>75</sup> (Newman, 1903, p. 271) – in establishing genuine proof, and the centrality, improbability, and incommunicability of the illative sense.

And though they drew different conclusions, Newman and James were alike in their attending to the *present feel* of one's thinking and experiencing. When we do this, we must abandon Locke and his 'ideas'. For why should it be that just because I perceive, say, a cyclist riding over a bridge, my idea of 'a-cyclist-riding-over-a-bridge' should be so similarly congenial to spatial analysis?

*As each object may come and go, be forgotten and then thought of again, it is held that the thought of it has a precisely similar independence, self-identity, and mobility. The thought of the object's recurrent identity is regarded as the identity of its recurrent thought... The continuous flow of the mental stream is sacrificed, and in its place an atomism, a brickbat plan of construction, is preached, for the existence of which no good introspective grounds can be brought forward, and out of which presently grow all sorts of paradoxes and contradictions... These words are meant to impeach the entire English psychology derived from Locke and Hume...<sup>76</sup> (James, 1890, p. 196)*

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<sup>70</sup> GA, 355.

<sup>71</sup> GA, 268.

<sup>72</sup> Dev, 111.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. Dev, 112.

<sup>74</sup> GA, 384–5.

<sup>75</sup> GA, 271.

<sup>76</sup> W James, *The Principles of Psychology*, Vol. I, (New York: Holt and Company, 1890), 196.

The vividness of *this* particular concrete experience is for Newman peculiarly intense<sup>77</sup>. By this he draws our attention to the fact that any particular – even in non-human nature – has something of *depth*. He reminds us that empirical sciences are *views*, a set of powerful shorthands, for our making sense of the world and for profiting thereby. As abstractions or views, their power is bought at the price of alienation from concrete experience. Thus the wobble of the earth’s orbit is ‘smoothed over’ by laws of nature. Thus the personal doings of humans are brought under apparent order by statistics. In both cases we have the temptation of the abstract (‘necessary laws’ or statistical averages) ruling the concrete (observable natural phenomena or the singular behaviour of a person). Newman warns us to resist this temptation. ‘Let units come first, and (so-called) universals second; let universals minister to units, not units be sacrificed to universals’<sup>78</sup> (Newman, 1903, p. 279).

In reflections like these Newman is protesting against the assumption that the generic and statistical approaches to human doings must be canonical – able to offer necessary prescriptions instead of probabilities. He effects a Copernican revolution in empiricist epistemology and natural science, reinstating the primacy and priority of concrete experience. We couldn’t know anything general unless we could know something particular<sup>79</sup>. As the tendency to think laws of nature are of necessity so the tendency to think that human statistics have mastery when really they are subordinate to particulars and persons living individual lives. As Newman observed, no statistical average of deaths in London under horse-drawn cab will augur this or that one’s death today<sup>80</sup>. After all, statistical averages are possible only because there are no average persons. So called laws of nature are possible because every part of the created order is particularly what it is. The abstract is ever downstream of the concrete and parasitic upon it. When we admit we do use ‘person explanations’ in ordinary life but feel that serious science requires something altogether more nailed-down, are we *always* showing commendable rigour or *sometimes* that we are captive to a Lockean paradigm of knowledge? We should resist being bounced to choose between scientific order or subjective fancy. We must not sideline *appropriate* clarity. If the subject matter will not bear the geometer’s rule, what of the carpenter’s?

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<sup>77</sup> “Aristotle”, according to the Newman scholar Johannes Artz: “does not see the same brilliance in the ‘singular’ that Newman sees in the ‘concrete’, the genuinely real as contrasted to the flat and pallid abstract universal”– J Artz, “Newman’s Contribution to Theory of Knowledge”, *Philosophy Today*, Vol. 4, Issue 1 (April 1960), 18.

<sup>78</sup> GA, 279.

<sup>79</sup> For Newman, it seems the first something we dimly know is not a something, but a *someone* – for a child recognizes on instinct “in the smiles or the frowns of a countenance which meets his eyes, not only a being external to himself, but one whose looks elicit in him confidence or fear” (GA, 62). The first thing we ever recognize is a face. Could it be that every recognition thenceforward, be it ever so impersonal, is dimly derivative of that first facial recognition?

<sup>80</sup> Cf. GA, 279: “A man who is run over in the street and killed, in one sense suffers according to rule or law . . . but what is not clear is how all these various conditions met together in the particular case . . . That this particular man out of the three million congregated in the metropolis, was to have the experience of this catastrophe, and to be the select victim to appease that law of averages, no statistical tables could foretell.”

### Concluding Remarks

When philosophy suppressed the person, it deprived itself of an explanatory recourse which completely escapes notice owing to its ubiquity. We do not just know things: we know persons. In non-human nature, we range over particulars as instances from which we form abstractions which give us, we feel, breadth. In the person, we encounter an instance, a particular with obvious *depth*. To set them in contrast: when we observe ice cream is beloved of children, cold on the palate, and likely to react with the lactose intolerant, we are saying something about ice cream, wherever it shows up. When we observe Jenny does not return things she borrows, John likes collecting clocks, and Jemima is forever apologizing for what she did not do, we are saying something about each person, rather than distributing their traits across humankind. When Jenny does not return that nice pen she borrowed – ‘well, you *know* Jenny’. For this reason, Newman quarrelled with the tendency to compose figures in history from stereotypes – ‘without the trouble of direct inquiry, to draw the individual after the peculiarities of his type’<sup>81</sup> (Newman, 1903, p. 32). To know a person, we must have experience of encounter. ‘All men have their price,’<sup>82</sup> (Newman, 1903, p. 279) a cynic might hold – that is until they deal with Fabricius.

This personal way of knowing other persons by which we implicitly locate tendencies and features in an undistributed way as characteristically picking out a person rather than in a distributed way as defining a species would be quite astonishing if it were not so commonplace. Used to a standard scientific way of explaining effects by appeal to essential features of a substrate which will ‘do what it does’ wherever it distributed, we meet another way which locates and terminates a host of explanations at the point of the individual, the person. It forces on us the thought that in the very thing sidelined by respectable scientists and philosophers – that is, the person and the particular – lies the possibility of measures thought more authoritative – natural laws and statistics. Let it be said once again that it is only from individuals following out the possibilities of the personal and particular that the generic and statistical can arise.

And it is our interactions with persons in all their individuality that remind us of this. The person is the icon of the particular and the prophet of cosmic surprise. Persons catch us unawares, change their minds, change course, make us think again, surprise us, break our templates. They force us back from stereotype to go case by case. They instance the contingency of our revered recipes for how things are. They teach humility not just before persons but before nature itself, forcing our

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<sup>81</sup> GA, 32.

<sup>82</sup> GA, 279. Newman used the example of the famously upright Roman commander, Gaius Fabricius Luscinus in illustration. “All men have their price; Fabricius is a man; he has his price;” but he had not his price”. Newman went on to remark: “[u]ntil we have actual experience of Fabricius, we can only say, that, since he is a man, perhaps he will take a bribe, and perhaps he will not”.



power to speak of things to wait on the power of things to speak to us. Persons are not simply imprisoned by empirical facts that go before and behind. There are cases, wrote James, 'where a fact cannot come at all unless a preliminary faith exists in its coming'<sup>83</sup> (James, 1897, p. 25).

It reminds us that for all the dazzle of grand, unifying theories, concrete particulars are the grist of epistemology as of other sciences. Yes, we all expect the sun to rise tomorrow, water to feel wet, rocks to resist the impress of our fingers, for this is how we generally find things to be. But we go wrong philosophically when we go from general expectation of how things go to an attribution of inherent necessity. So insistently did Newman regard the particular and the concrete as the grounding of all philosophy that he went far beyond its application to persons, extending it to all experience. The scientist might discern in the cosmos repetition and rhythm, but their formulae represent general and contingent states of affairs rather than necessary laws. The dance of nature is not a line dance.

Though regarding the 'laws of nature', the move from *general* to *necessary* seemed to Newman a philosophical sleight of thought, it does not change the facts that come before us. Whether we think the laws of the cosmos general or necessary, the world goes on. Rather it changes *us* in our stance to all that there is, offering power at the price of disenchantment. We can read nature 'as a machine and as a work; if we come to it with the assumption that it is a creation, we shall study it with awe; if assuming it to be a system, with mere curiosity'<sup>84</sup> (Tracy, 1999, p. 559). It sponsors the conceit that we can place ourselves 'somewhere' outside of all that there is to rule definitively on it. At a stroke, the constant attendance to the concrete and attestation of experience are redundant. They have been as a ladder kicked away on the rise to the realm of necessity. If we now know what knowing *essentially* is and nature's laws as *of necessity*, we do not need to check anymore. If particulars of experience are redundant then so are the *experiencers* – persons. And if the person is redundant then so is trust in persons.

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<sup>83</sup> W James, *The Will to Believe*, 25.

<sup>84</sup> LD VIII, 559.

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## FOSTERING INTEGRAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT: A CATHOLIC PERSPECTIVE ON WHOLE CHILD EDUCATION

## FAVORISER LE DÉVELOPPEMENT HUMAIN INTÉGRAL : UNE PERSPECTIVE CATHOLIQUE SUR L'ÉDUCATION GLOBALE DE L'ENFANT

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**Abstract** In the post-pandemic era, holistic education has gained prominence, particularly within the U.S. Catholic educational sector, as evidenced by the Roche Center for Catholic Education's convening at Boston College in June 2022. This gathering led to the development of the first conceptual Framework for Whole Child Education in Catholic Schools, aimed at fostering comprehensive development across physical, cognitive, social, emotional, and spiritual domains. This paper explores this framework through the lens of Christian anthropology, integrating insights from Catholic theology, Ignatian spirituality, and the socio-educational philosophies endorsed by Pope Francis. By detailing the framework's core beliefs—*cura personalis*, *acompaniment*, *Dios en Todo*, *Imago Dei*, and *Magis*—and their practical applications within diverse educational settings, the paper illustrates their profound impact on educational practices and student experiences in Catholic schools. Two case studies from the Diocese of Arlington and Archbishop Borders School highlight how these principles are operationalized to support inclusive education and nurture a holistic approach to student development, thereby contributing to a broader understanding of integral human formation in varied cultural and economic contexts.

**Keywords** Integral Human Development, Holistic Education, Whole Child Education, Pope Francis, Theological Foundations

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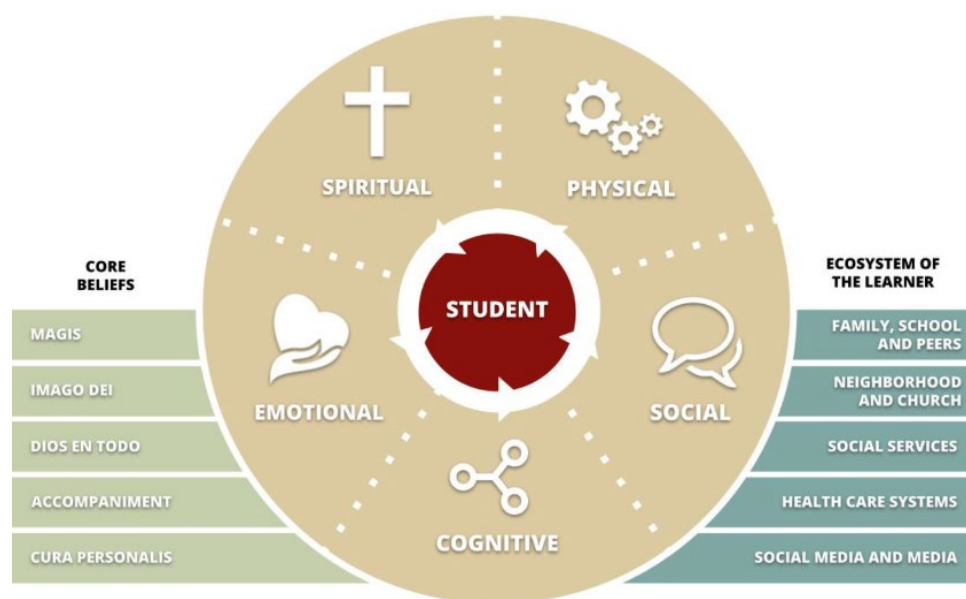
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**Résumé** Dans l'ère post-pandémique, l'éducation holistique a pris de l'importance, en particulier au sein du secteur éducatif catholique américain, comme en témoigne le Roche Center for Catholic Education. L'éducation s'est réunie au Boston College en juin 2022. Ce rassemblement a conduit à l'élaboration de le premier cadre conceptuel pour l'éducation globale de l'enfant dans les écoles catholiques, visant à favoriser un développement global sur les plans physique, cognitif, social, émotionnel et spirituel domaines. Cet article explore ce cadre à travers le prisme de l'anthropologie chrétienne, intégrant des idées de la théologie catholique, de la spiritualité ignatienne et du milieu socio-éducatif philosophies approuvées par le pape François. En détaillant les convictions fondamentales du framework : *cura personalis*, accompagnement, *Dios en Todo*, *Imago Dei* et *Magis* – et leurs pratiques applications dans divers contextes éducatifs, l'article illustre leur profond impact sur pratiques éducatives et expériences des élèves dans les écoles catholiques. Deux études de cas du Le diocèse d'Arlington et l'Archbishop Borders School soulignent à quel point ces principes sont opérationnalisés pour soutenir l'éducation inclusive et nourrir une approche holistique de l'élève développement, contribuant ainsi à une compréhension plus large de la formation humaine intégrale dans contextes culturels et économiques variés.

**Mots-clés** Développement humain intégral, éducation holistique, éducation globale de l'enfant, Pape François, Fondements théologiques

## **Introduction**

Across the United States, around 1.6 million PK-12 students were enrolled in nearly 6,000 Catholic schools in the 2022-2023 academic year (NCEA, 2022). Many of these schools' mission statements speak of their commitment to educating the whole child or taking a holistic approach to education, which is more important than ever in these post-pandemic years. Recognizing the great need for a shared understanding of holistic education in our Catholic schools— one that embodies a Christian anthropology of the human person— the Roche Center for Catholic Education at Boston College gathered researchers, practitioners, and philanthropists from throughout the United States for a Whole Child Convening at Boston College in June 2022. “The impact of our ever-changing society on schools creates an urgency... to re-examine education, as well as an opportunity to recommit... to educating the whole child by tending to all the domains of development: physical, cognitive, social, emotional, and spiritual” (Wytttenbach, McMahan, and Pileggi-Proud, 2023, p. 2). Out of this convening came the first conceptual Framework for Whole Child Education in Catholic Schools (figure 1). In this paper we will explore the framework for Whole Child Education, provide an overview of the core beliefs that animate the philosophy of this holistic approach, and provide two real world examples from a Diocese and a school living out these beliefs in the United States.



**Figure 1:** Framework for Whole Child Education in Catholic Schools (Wytttenbach, McMahon, and Pileggi-Proud, 2023)

### A Framework Defining Whole Child Education

Whole child education adopts a comprehensive approach that addresses the cognitive, social, physical, emotional, and spiritual aspects of learning. As a beloved child of God, each student has an eternal destiny as well as a calling for this life. The domains of the Whole Child Framework are interconnected and growth in one domain should be accompanied by growth in the others. The development of this framework was shaped by five core beliefs that are animated by the Catholic theological tradition, Ignatian spirituality, and by Pope Francis’ leadership and vision for Catholic education. These five core beliefs of *cura personalis*, accompaniment, *Dios en Todo*, *Imago Dei*, and *Magis* undergird not only the spiritual domain, but the cognitive, social, physical, and emotional domains as well.

The Framework for Whole Child Education in Catholic Schools is also influenced by an attentiveness to the ecosystem of the learner, recognizing that whole child education occurs through dynamic engagement with the family, the local and greater communities, and even with a global society. It is important to note that, “by design, the Roche Center model creates space for iterative, collaborative exploration of whole child policies, practices, and measurement” (Wytttenbach, McMahon, and Pileggi-Proud, 2023, p. 9). Just as this framework was developed through dialogue with researchers and practitioners, we find that exploring the praxis of Catholic schools helps us to study further the incarnation of this theoretical framework, bringing up further questions for dialogue and research. Indeed, “vision without appropriate method may be perceived as sterile platitude, while method without unifying vision is frequently passing fashion

or gadgetry” (Kolvenbach, S.J., 1993). Therefore, we intentionally nurture a symbiotic relationship between researcher and practitioner, all in service of the children in our schools.

In contemplating integral human development in the Catholic schools of today, we draw inspiration from Pope Francis’ vision for Catholic education, which is expansive, as we heard from him at the launching of the Global Compact on Education. He asks Catholic educators for an approach that is creative and filled with hope, an approach that engages all aspects of a global society in service of every child. In his earlier 2018 address to members of the “Gravissimum Educationis” Foundation, Pope Francis emphasized that only “by changing education can we change the world.” Pope Francis situated this call to change education with the context of a global society. For Francis, Catholic educators must nurture hope within themselves so as to “offer hope to the global world of today.”

“A globalization bereft of hope or vision can easily be conditioned by economic interests, which are often far removed from a correct understanding of the common good, and which easily give rise to social tensions, economic conflicts and abuses of power. We need to give a soul to the global world through an intellectual and moral formation that can support the good things that globalization brings and correct the harmful ones” (Pope Francis, 2018a).

The Whole Child Framework calls for such engagement with the entire ecosystem of the learner, confident that such an enterprise will be fruitful as it is rooted in five core beliefs that give enduring strength and hope.

### **Animating Beliefs of the Whole Child Framework**

In this section we outline the foundational beliefs of the Whole Child Framework. These beliefs are informed by the rich philosophical Catholic tradition of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits), spiritual writings from church leadership. We outline succinctly these five beliefs- *Cura personalis*, accompaniment, *Imago Dei*, *Magis*, and *Dios en Todo*- and provide examples of their relevance in Catholic schools.

*Cura personalis*, or “care for the whole person,” is well known at Jesuit institutions in the United States and emphasizes the importance of an attentiveness to “holistic education that attends to the spiritual and moral dimensions of a person in addition to his or her intellectual development” (Geger, 2014, p. 6). There is a danger for the reader in the United States, and perhaps in the West in general, that *cura personalis* may be understood in simply an individualistic sense. Research invites us beyond such an individualistic interpretation of *cura personalis*, looking to the Global South with a focus on Latin America for rich insights (Warner, Wyttenbach, and McMahon, 2023). Examining the insights of the Jesuit Conference of Latin American Provincials, we see that *cura personalis* is interwoven with accompaniment. As God accompanies us, so we are called to accompany others, and to allow ourselves to be accompanied as well. In light of God’s special love

for the suffering, vulnerable, and poor, Pope Francis frequently calls us to go to the margins and to pay particular attention to those forgotten or scorned in our world.

Recognizing the complexities and challenges of the current global reality, Pope Francis said in his 2019 message for the launch of the Global Compact on Education: “Never before has there been such need to unite our efforts in a broad *educational alliance*, to form mature individuals capable of overcoming division and antagonism, and to restore the fabric of relationships for the sake of a more fraternal humanity.” In order to form such individuals, we foster integral human development through tending to all domains of the Whole Child Framework, in partnership with the ecosystem of the learner. As we attend to *cura personalis* and accompaniment in our Catholic schools, we seek to form our students to live lives of service and of love.

As every person is made in the image and likeness of God, they have immeasurable dignity. While some ideologies seek to reduce the person to one aspect of their being, or simply see them as having a role to play in society, the core belief in the *Imago Dei* points us towards the transcendent dimension of the person that illuminates all aspects of their being and eternal destiny. Therefore, we believe in the importance of the Whole Child Framework being attentive to the presence of God in diverse cultures, the importance of equitable opportunities for all of God’s children to receive a whole child education, and to be truly inclusive and welcoming of all. Teacher formation and preparation is particularly important for schools to live out a culturally responsive pedagogy that honors the dignity of every child.

The core belief of *Magis* is deeply related to St. Ignatius’ motto *Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam*– “for the greater glory of God.” As we are anchored in our core beliefs, we strive for the *magis*, to develop and actualize our unique gifts in community for the greater glory of God. For us as Catholic educators, to live the *magis* requires magnanimity, or a “greatness of spirit.” “For Ignatius...magnanimity is a readiness to ‘think big,’ to embrace projects of grand scope. But it also includes, of necessity, a willingness to endure the additional conflicts that come with having that greatness of spirit” (Geger, 2012, p. 26). Researchers and practitioners alike are called to this greatness of spirit as we explore and practice the Whole Child Framework. The Whole Child Framework seeks to form students who are likewise inspired to strive for the *magis* in all that they do.

The core belief in God in all things, or *Dios en Todo*, is expressed in Spanish as a reminder that God may be encountered in every person, culture, and facet of the ecosystem of the learner. “The Catholic tradition teaches that in the mystery of the Incarnation, God entered into human culture at a specific moment in history. Jesus Christ entered fully into the human experience through the Israelite culture and language and He encounters every person today in their own culture and language” (Wytttenbach, Grejdus, and Browne, 2024, n.p.). The Whole Child Framework’s emphasis on intentional engagement with the ecosystem of the learner helps children and their

families to be strengthened and affirmed in their cultural and linguistic heritages. Through a communal discernment of *Dios en Todo*, within the ecosystem of the learner, we “affect the heart of society” and help to “give birth to a new culture” in a global society (Pope Francis, 2020).

As previously mentioned, the Whole Child Framework was developed through dialogue with researchers and practitioners. What do these core beliefs look like in action within school communities and in dialogue with the ecosystem of the learner? Through exploring concrete examples of core beliefs in action in Catholic schools, we gain further insight into the value and power of the Whole Child Framework, as well as glean further questions for research.

### **Core Beliefs in Action within the Diocese of Arlington, Virginia:**

#### ***Imago Dei***

As schools seek to implement and strengthen Whole Child Education, who is the student at the center of the domains of the Framework for Whole Child Education? Does this student in the Whole Child Framework (see figure one) include children with intellectual special needs? In Catholic schools in the United States, an increasingly growing number of dioceses, are intentionally more inclusive of children with exceptionalities, including the Diocese of Arlington.

While public schools in the United States are mandated to be accessible by children with special needs and therefore receive public funding designated for this, private schools typically lack such financial resources. Beyond the financial considerations, there can be fear and hesitancy from a school community when considering welcoming children with special needs. As Dr. Joe Vorbach, Superintendent of Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Arlington, shared,

“One of the understandable fears is that there’s so much that already needs to be accommodated for students with dyslexia, executive functioning issues, attention deficit, sometimes... anxiety and depression. There’s a lot already happening. And so a natural fear of teachers is ‘and then I’m going to be asked to do this?’ And yet, while teachers are constantly in search of more knowledge and professional development, their overall response to greater inclusion has been incredible” (J. Vorbach, personal communication, October 18, 2023).

The financial considerations for providing additional support and the need for trained specialists are real and substantial, but it is precisely in the face of these concerns that the invitation to trust exists. Genuine trust is not naive or based in utopian ideals— rather, it is pragmatic and animated by grace. The three most recent pontiffs— Saint John Paul II, Benedict XVI, and Francis— have been consistent and clear in their emphasis regarding the sacred dignity of every person with special needs (Boyle, 2020, p. 5). Pope Francis, speaking to a group with special needs in 2022, and referencing insights from John Paul II said,



“Welcoming people with disabilities and responding to their needs is a duty of the civil and ecclesial community, because ‘even when disabled persons are mentally impaired or when their sensory or intellectual capacity is damaged, they are fully human beings and possess the sacred and inalienable rights that belong to every human creature’” (Francis, 2022; quoting John Paul II, 2004).

Francis emphasizes that because of the *Imago Dei*, inclusion must not simply be a slogan, and it must not be limited to physical accessibility, but must encompass a “spirituality of communion” that reflects the love that Jesus has for each of us.

How then might a Catholic diocese or a Catholic school prepare to open their hearts and doors to children with special needs? While the theology inspiring such a decision may be clear, to what extent is it possible in reality? We invited Dr. Vorbach to share the history of the Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Arlington, Virginia in this regard. The Diocese of Arlington currently has 37 parish schools and 4 high schools. All 4 high schools admit students with intellectual disabilities and 15 of the parish schools do as well. The genesis for this commitment to children with special needs originated in the work of parents in the Diocese of Arlington 25 years ago. “A group of parents...earnestly wanted to make it possible for their children with Down Syndrome to attend the Catholic high school and to have the same kind of Catholic high school experience that their siblings might be having” at Pope Paul VI High School in Virginia, “and the school responded and has never looked back” (J. Vorbach, personal communication, October 18, 2023). The parents— a critical aspect of the ecosystem of the learner— raised money, ignited inspiration, and helped to bring about a formalized program of support at Paul VI High School for children with special needs. This parent group has since been formalized into Porto Charities, a 501 (c)(3) and continues to expand the ways it supports students with special needs in the Diocese of Arlington.

Another key aspect of the ecosystem of the learner— the neighborhood and church— is critical to their success. The bishop of Arlington granted permission for parishes throughout the Diocese of Arlington to do a voluntary second collection for Porto Charities, which signifies a diocesan public commitment to supporting the inclusion of children with special needs. Over half of the parishes in the diocese take part in this collection, which is a meaningful way for all of God’s faithful in the Diocese of Arlington to become a part of this mission.

Schools in the Diocese of Arlington began to see what was possible, thanks to the inaugural commitment at Paul VI High School and to the diocesan-wide support provided by the Bishop as well as many parishes. Prior to becoming Superintendent of Catholic Schools, Dr. Vorbach was the Head of School at Bishop O’Connell High School in Arlington, Virginia. We asked him to share his discernment and experience of welcoming students with intellectual disabilities in 2014. The school began with welcoming three students with intellectual disabilities, and Dr. Vorbach said of this experience:

“...a big takeaway for me was that this...was a situation where the leap of faith taken was borne out of our confidence that we had done a decent amount of due diligence. And when we leapt, we leapt with faith and with amazing support from our teachers. And God has been really good to O’Connell High School in this regard since then because...there are somewhere between 12 and 15 students annually...benefiting from this program at this school alone” (J. Vorbach, personal communication, October 18, 2023).

Anchored in the core belief of the *Imago Dei*, inspired and supported by the ecosystem of the learner, particularly the parents, Bishop O’Connell High School invested in professional development for faculty and staff. Part of their commitment to welcoming children with intellectual disabilities was to do this well. As the students with special needs learned, the whole community learned. “A student with Down Syndrome learning in your classroom is a very present manifestation of the fact that...everyone can learn and that everyone learns differently, which is true of all the other brains in the room too. So...teaching becomes better and community gets stronger” (J. Vorbach, personal communication, October 18, 2023). As schools learned how to better support children with intellectual special needs, there was a congruent deepening of understanding how to better support children with emotional, social, or spiritual special needs—needs that may not be as visible but that are just as real. In delighting in these children with Down Syndrome or another special need, a fundamental truth about the human person was revealed and confirmed— that every person is sacred and every person is a gift.

An important aspect of welcoming students with special needs in the Catholic high schools in the Diocese of Arlington is the support provided by peer mentors, taught and coached by expert teachers. High school students accompany students with special needs to their classes, help them to study, and sometimes collaborate with the teacher in order to differentiate instruction. The peer mentors would be the first to say that they often receive more than their mentees do, for as they accompany, they find that they themselves are the ones accompanied and that they grow in all five domains of the Framework for Whole Child Education. One peer mentor shared, “I have changed tremendously working with my mentee, Henry. He’s taught me many things that apply to any situation. He’s one of the main reasons I want to attend school every day” (Mcgowan, 2019). Peer mentors often admired the openness and pure love shared by their mentees. By committing to inclusion, these peer mentors and their school communities ended up receiving the gift of all-inclusive love and welcome from these children with special needs.

Recognizing the fear and uncertainty that can make it challenging for a school or a diocese to begin the discernment process regarding welcoming children with special needs, Dr. Vorbach advised:

“Enter into a very intentional discernment process that includes the solicitation of advice and perspective from those who are the key stakeholders, in other words parents who have children with intellectual disabilities, teachers who have special education background working with these students, other schools that have walked the path ahead of you. That would be the first thought.

And then the second would be, having done that, go forward knowing that it's very possible. Take that first step.” (J. Vorbach, personal communication, October 18, 2023).

As we come to honor the image of God, the *Imago Dei*, in each person and culture, moving beyond fear towards trust and hope, we are invited to listen to the words of Jesus in the Gospel of John: “Come and see.” For those who wrestle with the very real financial and capacity questions that must be faced if we are to welcome children with special needs into our schools— “come and see” what is happening in these schools in the Diocese of Arlington and in other parts of the United States and world.

### **Core Beliefs in Action at Archbishop Borders School, Baltimore, Maryland, USA; Member School of Boston College’s Two-Way Immersion Network (TWIN)**

#### *Dios en Todo*

Leaders and teachers from 28 schools throughout the United States converge every summer for a dynamic week of professional development with Boston College’s Two-Way Immersion Network (TWIN). While instruction and daily activities are typically conducted in English in schools in the United States, these TWIN schools are committed to dual language immersion, also known as two-way immersion, which centers and cultivates students’ languages and cultures. Many of these schools are Spanish-English programs, others are Mandarin-English, and one school, located on a Native American reservation in South Dakota, is Lakota-English.

This week reflects the vibrant cultures of these school communities, with full days of academically rigorous professional development and evenings of music, dancing, and laughter. In the United States’ current political landscape, which holds many debates and tensions about immigration, it is a distinct contrast to engage with these educators who are deeply committed to *Dios en Todo— God in All Things*. They invite us to think with the mind and heart of Christ and the Church rather than with political parties. The joy and richness of the Gospel animates this time and space.

One of these 28 schools is Archbishop Borders PK3-8 School in Baltimore, Maryland. Archbishop Borders School dates back to 1876, and originally served German immigrants. Catholic parochial school systems in the United States were instituted by the immigrant bishop, Saint John Neumann, and have a rich history of being of and for immigrant communities. Archbishop Borders continues in this tradition today, now serving immigrants primarily from Latin America as well as from Africa, Europe, and Asia. This is a relative rarity in Catholic schools in the United States. Only around 2% of Hispanic children in the United States are enrolled at Catholic schools, despite the fact that over 41% of the nearly 70 million Catholics in the United States identify as Hispanic (Ospino & Wyttenbach, 2022). Many of the students at Archbishop Borders School are first generation, having been born in the United States, and they draw from numerous vibrant communities from over 35 area towns.

Archbishop Borders School is the only full immersion dual language Catholic school in the Archdiocese of Baltimore. The decision to become a dual language school was made in 2010 and was rooted in a deep belief in *Dios en Todo* and in a commitment to living the belief of accompaniment. While many Catholic schools in the United States struggle to stay open, due to financial and enrollment difficulties, the leadership of Archbishop Borders recognized the deep faith of these immigrant communities and were confident that the desire for a Catholic education was there. By discerning *Dios en Todo* in all facets of the ecosystem of the learner, Archbishop Borders has been able to truly engage families, neighborhoods, and churches, in support of whole child education.

This belief in *Dios en Todo* guides the school's approach to enrollment, student support, teacher recruitment and formation, and dual language education. The financial needs and struggles are very real for this school community. Mrs. Amy Belz, the principal, shared that when considering students who have limited financial resources, "we want these kids to come to our school. So we have to be creative, and think outside the box a bit, and look at the net gain we have, not just financially, but from taking a family in from adding to the diversity, adding the cultural aspects that this family would bring, and knowing that we want to teach each child" (A. Belz & K. Ramos, personal communication, October 11, 2023). Anchored in their root beliefs, the leadership team accompanies families and advocates for funding and donations from various sources.

Faculty and staff retention is currently strong at Archbishop Borders School, which is a sign of the strength of their community. Faculty and staff draw from 11 countries, bringing their linguistic and cultural heritages with them into the ecosystem of the learner. They are trained and supported in all domains of the Whole Child Framework. Much of this training is anchored in faith and spirituality, with half days of retreat built in once a month as well as a full retreat day once a year. The school leadership finds that the incredibly deep spirituality of many of their faculty and staff from other countries truly infuses these formation experiences and the school community is thereby strengthened.

As the school accompanies the students and families, the school is likewise accompanied by the tremendous gifts that these children and their families bring with them. There is a culture of love and acceptance within the school community, and the family-school partnership is very strong. Mrs. Belz and Mrs. Ramos note this profound sense of family, spirituality, and faith that is so present among many from Latin America. "It is in the family and the community where Hispanic Catholics primarily develop our cultural and ecclesial identity, indeed a countercultural conviction in a society in which focus on the individual tends to prevail" (Ospino, 2010, p. 417). Such a strong sense of family identity animates the domains of Whole Child Education in multifaceted ways. For example, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS) is highly effective at Borders, due in part to the family partnership, which is animated by values of honesty,

ownership, and community support. The school leadership, in partnership with families, is attentive to honoring the dignity of each person and restoring relationships through consistent structure and mediation.

As Archbishop Borders School has found, "...there is shared wisdom in [the] family-centered paradigm and collectivist heritage that challenges the status quo and provides new horizons for how Catholic school leaders and educators approach the classroom, marketing, enrollment management, advocacy, and community partnerships" (Wytttenbach, Funk, & Browne, 2022, p. 89). To move beyond fear towards a trusting and hope-filled engagement with families and all ecosystems of the learner brings in extraordinary social capital and a powerful synergy in support of every child and their education.

### **Conclusion**

As Catholic schools seek to discern and live out core beliefs as they foster integral human development in partnership with the ecosystem of the learner, we find these words from Pope Francis, while not directed to educators specifically, to be very meaningful for us as we seek to move towards trust. As Pope Francis reminds us:

"Having doubts and fears is not a sin... The sin is to allow these fears to determine our responses, to limit our choices, to compromise respect and generosity, to feed hostility and rejection... The sin is to refuse to encounter the other, the different, the neighbor, when this is in fact a privileged opportunity to encounter the Lord ... to overcome our fears so as to encounter the other, to welcome, to know and to acknowledge him or her" (2018b).

In this engagement with the ecosystem of the learner, educators can draw inspiration from Francis by practicing attentiveness through listening and dialogue with all domains, thus infusing our educational enterprise with a spirit of joy. Just as the Framework for Whole Child Education was developed in dialogue with researchers, practitioners, and philanthropists, we draw further insights as well as further questions for research through examining the praxis of dioceses and schools, such as within the Diocese of Arlington and at Archbishop Borders Catholic School. In a global society and a universal church, we recommend that further research draw insights from Catholic schools in other countries. What does integral human development look like in the Global South? Europe? In the Far East? Where are there points of synergy and where are there opportunities for productive inquiry? We find great hope in the possibilities that live within a spirit of fraternal dialogue.

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## EDUCATING IN A DISCOURAGED EPOCH

Andrea Dessardo\*

**Abstract** We are going through a time of transition, a change of epoch symbolically started with the attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001, that is perhaps declaring the end of post-modern. While the latter was characterised by nihilism and lack of clear targets, the time that is being outlined seems instead to claim for a new axiology, as the previous moral apathy was no more sustainable. Our society is more worried by the need of protection and control, and invokes for limiting freedom in order to guarantee security.

This general perspective has unavoidable consequences also in education, that is maybe experiencing a quick change of paradigm. The present essay tries to outline this new trend, particularly through the analysis of some recent books for children.

**Key-words** hyper-modernism; axiology; Covid-19 pandemic; environmentalism; feminism.

**Résumé** Nous traversons une période de transition, un changement d'époque symboliquement amorcé par les attentats du 11 septembre 2001, qui annonce peut-être la fin du post-moderne. Alors que ce dernier se caractérisait par le nihilisme et l'absence d'objectifs clairs, l'époque qui se dessine semble au contraire réclamer une nouvelle axiologie, car l'apathie morale précédente n'était plus soutenable. Notre société est davantage préoccupée par le besoin de protection et de contrôle, et invoque la limitation de la liberté pour garantir la sécurité.

Cette perspective générale a des conséquences inévitables sur l'éducation, qui connaît peut-être un changement rapide de paradigme. Le présent essai tente d'esquisser cette nouvelle tendance, notamment à travers l'analyse de quelques livres récents destinés aux enfants.

**Mots clés** hyper-modernisme ; axiologie ; pandémie de Covid-19 ; environnementalisme ; féminisme.

### Education and pedagogy in the change of age

Francis Fukuyama, who in 1992, after the Soviet Union collapse, solemnly declared *The end of history*, was clearly wrong, we can serenely affirm today without any doubt. But also that time,

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while they were fighting in Yugoslavia, sincerely it seemed too early. In fact, how we had always known, history never ends, if anything it re-presents itself always again in different forms.

The time we are living, for instance, has something in common with what our ancestors experienced a century ago, when a long period of economic development and wealth, the so-called *belle époque*, suddenly vanished in the World War blood-bath, to which at least twenty years of totalitarianism followed, until another war blew up, greater and hugely more savage and violent than the first one. Also the new war, that is now being fought in Ukraine, is most likely another phase of the long and troubled historical transition we are going through, and that began in the 90s, when naively Fukuyama thought it was over. It is by now quite clear that the “special military operation” led by Russia is the premise for an adjustment in world geostrategic and economic balance.

Other important milestones of this transitional period were clearly the terroristic attacks on September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 – this event was an evident watershed in our lives, as we realised in those exact moments –, followed by the wars in Afghanistan and in Iraq together with a massive wave of Islamistic terror all around the world, then the Lehman Brothers’ bankruptcy in 2008, the short era of the “Arabic spring”, followed by the massive migrations from Africa to Europe, and perhaps also the Covid-19 pandemic, that increased the general feeling of insecurity and, consequently, the public control on our everyday routine. We well know the rule of this trade-off: ceding freedom for security.

In the present paper I would like to present a reflection, that could be successively deepened, about the responsibilities of education and pedagogy in the time we are going through, a time that seems to be marking an authentic turning point in the values we share, in the economic system, in the geostrategic scenario. As I am going to explain in these pages, it seems that the way we used to educate children in the past decades is outdated, because the axiological frame in which it was conceived, has been overcome. Through the concept of “hyper-modern” suggested by some scholars, I will try to outline the main characteristic of our epoch, supporting the idea that something crucial is going on also in educational matters. I decided to face this particular issue through a brief review of some books published in Italy in order to illustrate to children the Covid-19 pandemic: in my opinion the main approach adopted in these books clearly describes a vigorous change in critical thinking, obedience and compliance to rules, roles of family and institutions and, generally, trust in the future, in human faculties and in science.

Italian scholar Romano Luperini (2005), among others, situates the end of the so-called post-modernism on September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001, arguing that it changed, from different points of view, common people perception of their reality. Among them, he identifies a general renaissance in civic and moral responsibility and a lesser inclination to the black humour, a typical post-modern



characteristic and literary *topos* of the second half of 20th century. Facing the downfall in invincibility of these Western countries winners after the Second World War and in the cold war, intellectuals and scholars felt the duty to product counter-narratives, that oppose to violence and fear of terrorism.

Pope Francis (2015) sharply observed that ours is not just an age of change, but instead a change of age. He affirmed that in Florence in 2015, during the Italian Catholic congress about “new humanism”. Another famous definition he expressed, it is that we are already fighting the Third World War, but “into pieces”.

As Christians engaged in education, it is our compulsive duty to reflect on the values and the ideologies that this time is carrying on, because – I believe – they could have serious consequences on the way our societies would be shaped and built up, and of course they affect directly education and pedagogy, considered as the philosophical thought on education and its needs and goals.

We are called to meditate – looking at the Jubilee of year 2025 - about hope and trust, when the attitude in thinking the future and the place of human beings on planet Earth is in fast transformation, and when even what actually is a human being, is no more so evident. Also the very ideas of hope and trust are in question, when the only accepted authority seems to be the positive science: but we know that hope is not just a statistic projection or a mathematical probability calculus.

### **Post-modernity is over (or it was just an illusion)**

This change of age is been defined by some scholars in the first years of the new millennium (Lipovetsky, 2004; Ascher, 2005; Aubert, 2004, for examples), as “hyper-modern”, in order to mark the discontinuity with the previous period, that we used to call with Lyotard – especially in the United States - “post-modern” or, after Zygmunt Bauman (2000), “liquid modernity”.

While post-modern was characterised by a general sense of nihilism and lack of stability in ideological issues and in axiology, hyper-modern seems to try, in an instinctive, confused and de-structured way, to frantically restore the most affordable aspects of modernity, looking for new meanings. This effort is largely spontaneous and not properly organised, but presents some common signs. “Lipovetsky highlights how hyper-modern does not see just consumerism and hedonism extension [...], but also the affirmation of some forms of solidarity, of ethical responsibility, of ecological activism: a logic of emergency [...], which prevents to speak of a current nihilism dominion, since it represents instead a remedial” (Donnarumma 2014, p. 21)<sup>1</sup>. Raffaele

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<sup>1</sup> All the translation from Italian into English are made by the author of this paper.

Donnarumma, trying to justify its choice for this definition of our time, explains that the prefix “hyper- is the must to be of contemporaneity, its prestational obsession” (*ibi*, p. 20). While he, after Gilles Lipovetsky, prefers to label our years as “hyper-modernity”, other authors have explored different possible definitions, like “new realism” (Luperini, 2005). Umberto Eco (2012) rather used to refer to the attitude of living in this period as “negative realism”.

The most significant characteristic of our time - I believe - is the reaction, maybe not always totally conscious, to the values depreciation, in a sort of “comeback to order”. “Comeback to order” (“*ritorno all’ordine*”) was also the main cultural and artistic manifesto in Italy in early 1920s.

This renewed impulsive need for order and clearness translates, on one hand, into the request for social control, security and protection, as shown by the increasing results of populist and right-wing parties worldwide, especially in Western countries, and on the other hand with the growth and strengthening of laws, rules but also social conventions and judgments, a sample of which is offered by the woke movement and the cancel culture, and, on a different level, by the empowerment of supranational organisations like the United Nations, the World Health Organisation, NATO and the European Union, to which the global government is progressively transferred, often without directly consulting the citizens. These organisations are no more just organs of coordination among allied sovereign countries, but they tend to state rules and mandatory political goals, that seriously limit the voters’ freedom.

We can remember that Jacques Delors, referring to the European Community, used to say that its development is caused and quickened by crises rather than by affluence periods and wealth. Nowadays we can at last understand how cynical this statement was and how dangerous, because it means that the emergencies are functional to the power, that could be tempted to create them, when they are not, in order to reach its goals.

In a pedagogical perspective, we can notice, instead of the support to critical thinking, that was the basis of education in the second half of 20<sup>th</sup> century until the 1990s, a new wave of conformism and the demand of compliance is arising, some-way that is similar to the social context of years 1920s. Also a hundred years ago, in the middle of the post-war crisis, European societies reacted with a strong and dramatic demand for safety and control in politics and in economy, that, as we know, tragically carried to authoritarianism.

### **Memory of pandemic**

I believe that the way we faced the recent pandemic in 2020-2021 offers a persuasive evidence of what I mean.

I analysed, in some previous studies (see, in English, Dessardo, 2022) some Italian books – but abroad it would have been likely the same - that tried to explain the pandemic and its medical and social effects to children and teenagers, looking for their educational aims. I think that a fruitful perspective to analyse how the emergency has been perceived and, above all, which values and practices have been particularly promoted, is to read books and magazines addressed to children, because of their intrinsic and necessary clarity and conciseness. A book conceived to be read by a child (or with a child) must avoid complexity and it expresses unambiguously the message the author means the most urgent, with simple words, convenient examples and with persuasive narrations. I have reviewed some of the main works published in Italy in the last three years, with an analysis approach of qualitative type, in order to classify the primary elements of what we could name the “social pedagogy” of the Covid-19 pandemic. I have identified the most sold books and the ones printed by the main national publishing houses and then I have observed who the authors are, on which aspects they focus, which style they adopt, trying to sum up the “pedagogical code”, that seems to be promoted among the youngsters facing the medical emergency, but also in a more general perspective. In facts, we can infer that some suggestions do not seem to respond just to the present conjuncture, but they hint to long-term horizon, that implies a wider change in everyday habits. Here I limit my analysis just to a couple of titles, while I already developed it in other more more specific essay (Dessardo, 2022; Dessardo, 2024), in which I described every single work (Capua, 2020; Cattaneo, 2020; Cavallo, 2021; Nerini, Longo, 2020; Pellai, Tamborini, 2021; Sbattella, 2020; Vascotto, 2020a, 2020b).

Instead of – as I naively expected - helping the youngsters in overcoming the lock-down shock, the discouraging isolation and the loneliness of a long period during which they were not allowed to meet either their mates and their relatives, particularly their grand-parents, the great majority of these books just limited themselves to recommend the strict respect of some rules like wearing the surgical mask, washing hands and avoiding personal contacts. These books were often nothing more than “good manners manuals”, without caring much about children’s psychological well-being. Grown up in a Western democratic country, I had never seen before a more extreme case of political compliance in culture and among intellectuals, who just in very few cases dared to claim against the almost total denial of some obvious rights like meet, freely gather, go to work and even go on strike. Some doctors had been disbarred from their professional register and prevented to exercise, just because reluctant in accepting ministerial instructions. In any other circumstances, also feebler measures would be harshly criticised as dangerous attacks to democracy.

Children would never forget these two years and so we adults will do too, of course, with different degrees of awareness. But we must admit that we cannot foresee how children will elaborate this experience as grown up, in their future political and social decisions, and how they will judge the way the pandemic was managed. I fear a radicalisation of our youth in the next decades, as a consequence of the impoverishing of democratic debate in these two years and as a reaction to the

actual injustice with which their childhood has been treated. I think that the damages caused to economy, but above all to democratic life and even to our psychological health, will be largely worse than the benefits achieved in fighting the contagion, if any. According to Giorgio Agamben (2021), one among the very few intellectuals that have raised their voices against the rules implemented by the Italian authorities, I believe that health, *per se*, is just a relative worth, for which we should not sacrifice our fundamental freedoms, on which we built our societies. Agamben, during the pandemic emergency, wrote: “The first thing that the panic wave which has paralysed the country clearly shows, is that our society does not believe any more in anything but in bare life (in Italian: “nuda vita”, literally “naked life”). It is obvious that Italians are ready to sacrifice almost all, ordinary life conditions, social relationships, job, even their friendships, the loved ones and religious and political beliefs for the danger to get sick” (*ibi*, p. 17). And moreover, pointing out the real risk, more dangerous than the simple provisional sanitary restrictions: “A society living in a perpetual emergency cannot be a free society. [...] What that worries is not at most and not only the present, but the further. As wars left as legacy to peace a variety of ominous technologies, from barbed wire to nuclear power stations, it is very likely that they will try to continue some experiments that governments did not reach to achieve also after the sanitary emergency” (Agamben, 2021, p. 18).

During these months there were almost no contrast among political parties, that supported, on the left and on the right, the government almost unanimously, no more parliamentary debate, very few critical positions in media and press, that use to comment the government measures, the most extreme too, sometime even with enthusiasm, like it is sadly done in totalitarian countries. When the distance from the events, in some years, will permit to consider with more serenity the experiences, in which we are now plunged, analysing media and the cultural production of these days, historians in the future would (hopefully) notice the anomaly of the uniformity in communication, that, instead to educate citizens to critical thinking, aimed to melt the individuals into the mass and to involve them in a greater project (Canetti, 1960) that in that specific situation was the fight against Sars-Cov-2, but that could easily change in the next years, just identifying and defining new political goals. Probably the climate change and the defence of the environment will represent the emergencies in the next future, like the so-called United Nations’ Agenda 2030 suggests.

At the moment, we can be surprised that, although the great success of Foucault’s theories (1975) on control society and biopolitics, long-lastingly worldwide discussed in universities, almost nobody, either in academic milieu and among progressive intellectuals, seems to be worried by the drastic reduction of freedom spaces and by some authoritarian impulses.

It may be useful to read again Roberto Esposito’s *Immunitas* (2002) (and also its precedent work *Communitas*, 1998):

When politics takes on life as object of direct intervention, it ends to reduce it to a state of absolute immediacy. [...] That is like if politics, in order to face life, would need to deprive it of any qualitative dimension, to make it “just life”, “plain life”, “naked life” (Esposito, 2002, pp. 17–18).

This paradigm could have decisive implications in pedagogy and education: “The relationship between me and the other – between the immune one and the common – is represented in terms of a destruction, that in the end tends to involve the both into the conflict” (Esposito, 2002, p. 21).

Starting from their Latin etymology, Esposito explains how the two terms *immunitas* and *communitas* are in opposition: a suggestion that may be important to have present in our thought. The main educational paradigm, that the pandemic may have produced, seems to be more concentrated on hygiene and health safety, rather than on social bonds or, we could also say, more focused on “immunity” rather than on “community”. And it is maybe an axiological paradigm that concerns not only the emergency months of Sars-Cov-2, but the next future decades.

### **Girls’ power!**

In the most ideological specimen I saw, *Il dottor Li e il virus con in testa una corona* (“*Doctor Li and the virus with a crown on its head*”) by Francesca Cavallo (2021), the same author of the worldwide feminist best-seller for young girls *Storie della buonanotte per bambine ribelli* (“*Bed-time tales for rebel girls*”) (Cavallo, 2020), the faith in science and the obedience to it were not just limited to the pandemic, but they were openly connected to the engagement for a fairer and more equal society. Therefore, who had some doubts about the actions against Covid-19 contagion, seemed to suggest the author, in some way could be an obstacle also along the way for the general scientific progress, for the safeguard of natural environment, the fight against racism and prejudices, for a more equal economic system and so on.

All the protagonists of the books published in Italy during the pandemic, in order to reason about it, were girls. Maybe that just for a sort of compensation after decades during which feminine characters were in clear minority and often misrepresented, but maybe also responding to the stereotype of girls as more responsive, diligent and obedient than boys. Thus, while boys embodied, also in several literary works, the vanguards of 20<sup>th</sup> century ideologies – fascism and other authoritarianisms – girls seem now to be the forerunners of our 21<sup>st</sup> century hyper-modern times. Greta Thunberg herself could be considered the ideal leader of this crowd of “rebel girls”. After her famous school strikes for climate, she has again and again demonstrated for other humanitarian causes: the migrants in the Mediterranean, the right of Palestine to independence (and the condemn to Israel politics, quite often marked by anti-Semitism) and of women to safe abortion, Ukrainian freedom against Russian aggression and so on.

Girls are more and more often the protagonists of numerous novels and films written and produced in the last years. The main reason, probably, could be that this is a sort of compensation for the absolute traditional male predominance in the past decades, but maybe this happens also because girls are stereotypically perceived as more trustworthy and more compliant in accepting new rules, and are considered more naturally social than boys: so they can be presented as smart civic models. This idea can be true even if very often female characters are shown as rebels or nonconformists, odd and eccentric, usually refusing the traditional roles that the society set for them. Nowadays heroines are no more princesses or fairies, who accept passively to be rescued by knights and to marry the charming prince, but they act directly in order to realise their dreams and to achieve their own goals. But precisely in this refuse of tradition and in the subversion of the old rules lays the new educative paradigm, which is arranging a new normality, a new obedience, a new need for compliance. So, if boys were the vanguard of 20<sup>th</sup>-century ideologies, sometime tragically, girls are the pacers of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and Greta Thunberg seems to be just the most known character of this new epic.

But it can be seen that this message seems to be possible in all the publications I read, through the pledge of a sacrifice, through the proof of personal surrender, in order to achieve a higher collective well-being in the future. Conceptually, there is no difference between such a discourse and, for instance, the call to enlist in the army to fight the enemy in the trenches, as our forefathers did a hundred years ago, and how children's books actually told about it in the 1920s (see e.g. Gotta, 1926). The individual life can be sacrificed for the higher collective benefit: nowadays no more for the nation, of course, but for humankind.

In the last decades, we have educated children to think critically, to deconstruct stereotypes and social constructs – such as family, sex and gender, religion, nation. Today, I think, we are facing the *pars construens*: a new worship is growing over the ruins of our civilisation and it requires compliance and obedience.

I can confirm my hypothesis, reading, among others, *Il dottor Li e il virus con in testa una corona* (Cavallo, 2021), written by Francesca Cavallo and illustrated by Claudia Flandoli in a vague manga style. The text was originally freely available on Cavallo's personal web-site and then published, by the well-known progressive publishing house Feltrinelli, after a crowd-funding action.

Francesca Cavallo had already achieved international fame thanks to *Storie della buonanotte per bambine ribelli* (Cavallo, Favilli, 2018), which sold hundreds of thousands copies worldwide. She wrote it together with Elena Favilli, drafting a kind of feminist encyclopaedia, which collects a hundred short biographies (per volume) of different women (the third book [2020] is specially dedicated to migrant women, the fourth to "Italian extraordinary women", 2023). The selection is really wide and various, including, at the same time, Serena Williams and Rita Levi Montalcini,

Malala Yousafzai and Frida Kahlo, Margherita Hack and Michelle Obama, all proposed as different models to emulate. Some of mottoes with which the books have been advertised were: “Once upon a time there was a young girl who dreamt of... marrying a charming prince? No, of going to Mars!” and “To the rebel girls of the world: the story you cannot find out in the book, is the one you are already writing”. Elena Favilli (2021) has recently published also *Guida per bambine ribelli. Alla scoperta del corpo che cambia (A Guide for Rebel Girls at the Discovery of Their Altering Body)*, a progressive handbook about puberty and growth. “Rebel girls” hence became a rich brand to exploit, with a great deal of audience understanding, and were the sign of a profound change in common sense.

Coming back to *Il dottor Li e il virus con in testa una corona*, this book clearly points at trust in science as the only way to go through the emergency. This book is addressed to an older audience (aged 8-12 years), so the attention is not focused just on prevention and rules, but also on some civic values to enforce. Dr. Li Wenliang, the Chinese scientist from Wuhan, who was the first to denounce the virus spreading, is frankly presented as a martyr of the scientific new worship, almost a secular saint for our days and similarly other scientists (*scienziate*, “women scientist”, mum says) at work in order to find out the origin of the virus, a vaccine and a therapy.

### ***Ce n'est qu'un début***

The author insists also on the possibility of an active role for children, apart from the pandemic, desiring a “fairer world”. It is properly a call to action, where the pandemic seems to be just a pretext, an excuse to do active politics. Dr. Wenliang and Greta Thunberg have very few in common, but in this vision they fight on the same side, for science and against obscurantism, prejudice, economic liberalism and the exploitation of the planet resources. Therefore, doubting the measures adopted against Covid-19, becomes fatally next to questioning scientific progress itself, but also environmental concerns and even social justice, peace and international cooperation and security. In this way, a new system of values is arising. And values, by definition, are not questioned, values demand faithful adherence and obedient compliance.

With some exceptions, we must acknowledge that the great majority of these books are concerned at best with preventive measures, especially the importance of the correct way to wear the surgical mask, on maintaining the hands clean and keeping social distance, justifying and confirming the restrictions that have prevented the young readers to go to school, to meet their friends and to see their grandparents. We can say that a number of these works look more like handbooks containing pieces of advice, and in some case like good manners pamphlets, rather than like imaginative tales written to comfort the youngest readers in difficult times.

These books are usually filled with subtle optimism and overall with the fundamental confidence in the power of science. A recurrent issue is, in fact, the “scientific” basis, that tries to explain what coronavirus is, its origins, how it spreads and, of course, how it can be defeated and how

children can play their part in this big historical challenge. Optimism, indeed, persuades that the pandemic could be treated as a historical challenge to accept and not as a catastrophe to cope with. A challenge to win all together.

### **Future is backwards**

I quoted books about the pandemic, but we can find out other features of hyper-modern styles in other literary works. Raffaele Donnarumma, professor at the University of Pisa, employed the category of hyper-modern to review the recent Italian and international literature, marking the recurring use of tales in the first singular person point of view, even when the story is clearly fictional, but pretending to offer an authentic testimony. And that because, according to Donnarumma, after the post-modernist dissolution of traditions and ideologies, with the loss of social relevance by parties and churches, only the individual seems to be reliable: in a broken up society only the individual subject, with his or her weaknesses, in his or her loneliness, seems to be authentic and trustworthy.

Among other common traits of hyper-modernist literature there is the re-discovering of realism and recurring references to the past, often object of nostalgic representations, as if the lost meaning could be found only in history (or just in memories), while the present appears void and insignificant. Actually many novels written for the youngsters in the last twenty years – at least the Italian books I read – are set in the past, particularly during fascism and World War II, inspiring children to fight against present time injustice and discriminations and invoking a sort of new resistance. But many books also describe in realistic narrative, through their protagonists' eyes, our present days with their problems, directly calling the young readers to act for improving them. Call to actions, as we saw in pandemic books, are other traits of hyper-modern and they often have clear pedagogical goals. In this perspective, literature does not constitute just an aesthetic experience, but it has very often declared social aims, in such a way as to reading means to become more aware and engaged.

Quite the opposite, we could object referring to the great achievement of the fantasy genre, emerged exactly at the end of the last century with the beginning of *Harry Potter's* saga, followed by a large crowd of imitations in the first decade of the third millennium. But, according to Darko Suvin's explanation (1979), science-fiction, fantasy, utopia and dystopia are all artistic representations of the detected tensions between the unsatisfying reality and its possible alternatives. Fantasy, a genre established by two Catholic writers like J.K.K. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis, reflects, according to Fredric Jameson (1975), to whom we owe the most influential essay about post-modern (Jameson, 1984), an archaic and confused nostalgia for the agricultural and pre-capitalistic societies. In fantasy novels heroes desperately, and sometime unsuccessfully, fight against obscure forces that pervertedly control their universes, with the aim to re-establish and



restore an ancient and mythic order of justice. Fantasy novels are in depth allegories of the disorder and troubles of our present days.

### **A quiet hopeless conclusion**

I hope I have persuasively presented some urgent issues about which we Catholic pedagogues and educationists would have to face and deal with. After the first phase of de-structuration of traditional values during the so-called post-modernism, that we can consider the *pars destruens* of a long historical process, now we are probably dealing with an embryo of *pars construens*, where the vacuum of values is being filled with something new.

Honestly I does not believe that Catholic culture would be able to validly intervene in the debate: other actors are leading the present phase and are setting the rules, completely ignoring the Catholic point of view. But it could be useful at least to be aware. Children would be probably called to act for the defence of the environment, abolishing any ontological difference between humans and animals, with an emphasis that will be similar to that used by authoritarian regimes a century ago. Or they would be rallied for the homosexual people's rights. In the disintegration of our societies, perhaps the only thing that deserves salvation is in health, in our biological lives (*nuda vita*, as Agamben and Esposito say), and in nature, for which science is to be the only remaining source of meaning and therefore an object of the new universal worship.

A relevant aspect that can be observed, and that is particularly evident in books written for the children, was the frequent - explicit or implicit - recourse to the concept of sacrifice: the personal surrender in our freedoms during the pandemic would be surely rewarded in the future by a greater collective gain, following the same logic of religion or, more properly, of totalitarian ideologies: and this option, I mean, risks to cut off the most genuine religious pedagogical thought, replacing it with a false form of sacrifice.

While in the past decades children in Occident were raised in a sound scepticism, now compliance seems to be openly encouraged. But science replaced religion in the need for faith. Almost all the books I read presented the scientific research as the only solution, the real source of human salvation. The new order maybe would not be violent nor cruel, but not less exigent in asking for compliance. Moreover, its battles would often seem to be right and fair, deserving to be fought also by Christians, in order to achieve a more equal society, ruled by humanist principles.

I think that we would not miss the opportunity to collaborate with all the people of good will, still these common battles would not reveal their anti-Christian nature or, better saying, their indifference to religion. Our alliance with humanity, even when it seems to be faraway from God's grace, is a distinctive character of our faith, the faith in the incarnated God. And perhaps stays here the inner kernel of trust.

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## “THEY SEEM NOT TO HAVE BEEN TRAINED. ...” ST. ANTONY’S STUDENTS’ REACTION TO THE LOCAL BROTHERS’ MANAGEMENT OF THEIR FORMER SCHOOL IN ZAMBIA, 2021-2023

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**Abstract** Many Catholic mission schools established and administered by expatriate missionaries from countries in the global north are now in the hands of indigenous Africans. This, in some cases, has had implications on the running of schools, in terms of maintaining infrastructure, academic standards, discipline, and Catholic identity. This article is a critical analysis of a conversation on a WhatsApp group of former students of a Catholic mission school in Zambia, between 2021 and 2023. The article critically analyses the disappointment of the former students, with the Indigenous Zambian Brothers presently in charge of the school that Anthony Simpson, a British anthropologist in his ethnography of the school calls St. Antony’s. The statement, “They seem not to have been trained” by one of the former students seems to have encapsulated the disappointments of his fellow former students. The Missiological theory of Henry Venn (1796-1873) and Rufus Anderson (1796-1880) on the imperative of indigenising missionary churches has been utilised as the analytic framework in this qualitative case study. Two conclusions are made in the article. The first one is that the former students of St. Antony’s seemed to have over-looked the stark reality that the local Brothers did not have the kind of resources in terms of money, equipment, and skills that the European Brothers had. Secondly, rather than discussing how to strengthen the Alumni association, they somewhat depreciated the Black Brothers, thereby, buying into the racial notion that Black Zambian Brothers are incapable of running St. Antony’s as efficiently as the Europeans did.

**Keywords** St. Antony’s, Marian Brothers, Missionary, Local Brothers, Mockery, Headmaster, Former Students

**Résumé** De nombreuses écoles catholiques créées et administrées par des missionnaires expatriés de pays du Nord sont aujourd’hui entre les mains des Africains autochtones. Dans certains cas,

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cela a eu des conséquences sur le fonctionnement des écoles en termes de maintien des infrastructures, des normes académiques, de la discipline et de l'identité catholique. Cet article est une analyse critique d'une conversation sur un groupe WhatsApp d'anciens élèves d'une école missionnaire catholique en Zambie, entre 2021 et 2023. L'article analyse de manière critique la déception des anciens élèves à l'égard des Frères indigènes zambiens actuellement en charge de l'école qu'Anthony Simpson, un anthropologue britannique, appelle dans son ethnographie de l'école Saint Antoine. La déclaration de l'un des anciens élèves, « Ils semblent ne pas avoir été formés », semble résumer la déception de ses camarades. La théorie missiologique d'Henry Venn (1796-1873) et de Rufus Anderson (1796-1880) sur l'impératif d'indigénisation des églises missionnaires a été utilisée comme cadre analytique dans cette étude de cas qualitative. L'article tire deux conclusions.

La première est que les anciens élèves de Saint Antoine semblent avoir négligé la dure réalité selon laquelle les Frères locaux ne disposaient pas du type de ressources en termes d'argent, d'équipement et de compétences dont disposaient les Frères européens.

Deuxièmement, au lieu de discuter de la manière de renforcer l'association des anciens élèves, ils ont quelque peu déprécié les Frères noirs, adhérant ainsi à la notion raciale selon laquelle les Frères noirs zambiens sont incapables de gérer l'école Saint-Antoine aussi efficacement que les Européens.

**Mots Clés** de Saint Antoine, Frères Marials, Missionnaires, Frères locaux, Moqueries, Directeur d'école, Anciens élèves

## **Introduction**

There is, in this article, a topic for research and a proposition that would probably address the perennial requests from St. Antony's to the former boys to help fix a problem of one kind or another at their former school. Broadly, the article recalls the questions that Simpson (2003a) asks: What happens to an institution established by Europeans once they are gone, and it is in the hands of the local people? Are the local Brothers enjoying the same deference as the expatriates who have left? What kind of school will St. Antony's be if in the hands of Africans, and what implicit knowledge will guide those who lead the school? As a matter of fact this article in its finality ends with questions. An attempt to explore the implications of the withdrawal of the European Brothers from St. Antony's and the financing of the school was made (Cheyeka et al., 2011). The undeniable truth is the reality that transition from Western missionaries to the local clergy and lay religious in Zambia is complete. The massive flow of Western missionaries into Africa is in fact, now something of the past across missionary societies (Lado, 2020).

In any event, between 2021 and 2023, former boys of St Antony's were enraged by the school's poor results, incidents of theft, mockery, dirt, dilapidation of infrastructure, congestion in the dormitories, poor state of water reticulation and many other problems at their former school. They largely blamed the school management of the African Marian Brothers for the problems. The former students discussed how a school they called "Half-London" because of its beautiful buildings and the surroundings, especially the lawns and flower borders (Simpson, 2003b: 1) could

possibly lose its ranking in academic results, on one hand, discipline, order and cleanliness and maintenance of infrastructure, on the other. Firstly, the former students questioned the school administration and wondered if at all, the European Brothers had prepared the African Brothers to run the school. Secondly, they questioned whether the European Brothers had stopped supporting the school materially. Some former boys even asked if St. Antony's was still a Catholic school. In exasperation, one of them referring to the African Brothers wrote: "They seem not to have been trained." Scholars of Catholic education have placed logical emphasis on what makes a school Catholic (Wodon, 2021: 270). This is evident in many articles published in Catholic-focused education journals such as the *Journal of Catholic Education*; *International Studies in Catholic Education*; and in the landmark collection by Gerald Grace and Joseph O'Keefe (2007) for their *International Handbook on Catholic Education* (Wodon, 2021: 271). The former students of St. Antony's wondered about the identity of their school.

Generally, in Zambian thought, a 'mission station' is a place where European, American or missionaries reside. This is very much the classic Beach and Fahs (1925: 223)'s definition cited by Reinhard Henkel (1989: 34); that a mission station is "a place of residence for one or more missionaries from Christendom." The definition excludes non-white missionaries and Henkel provides a well-known example of this definition in Zambia when Lubwa Mission of the Free Church of Scotland under development by an African, David Kaunda, father of Zambia's President Kenneth Kaunda, only came to be called a mission from 1913 onwards when the first European missionary (Rev. Robert McMinn) settled there (Henkel, 1989: 24-25). The point being made is that although mission stations are in the hands of Africans, the Euro-centric definition still lingers. In fact, the most common question asked about St. Antony's is: "Is it still a mission school?" This question could also be understood as inquiring if European Brothers are still at St. Antony's or if the school is still a Catholic school.

In any event, what sparked off the conversation that this paper is examining was an assault on a Grade 9 student by a Grade 12 student. Although this 2021 incident at St. Antony's has to be understood in the context of mockery, which Simpson explored in his ethnography of the school, it opened up a Pandora's box; it exposed what was "hidden" from the public. The conversation disclosed a number of themes that are interrogated. They included how the former students cherished the education they had received from St. Antony's when it was still in the hands of European Brothers' and how they denigrated their kind, the African Brothers. Sousa Jamba (1989: 9) cited in Simpson (2003b: 7) argues that the feeling that all that is African is inferior runs very deep among the post-colonial generation. This seems to be a warranted argument that cannot blithely be dismissed. It is not unusual in conversations of politics, economic hardships, corruption, and social problems in Zambia to hear the question, "What is wrong with us Black people?" Or "What is wrong with our skin?" The older people who experienced the 1950s of British colonial rule will say, "We were better off during the Federation under Roy Welensky."

In this article, it is argued that the local Brothers are reasonably well-trained. They may not have gone to Marian schools for their secondary education, but they arguably underwent solid Marian spiritual formation and teacher education. How much school leadership skills they possess, is a different matter. This article only attempts to critically examine the conversation of former St. Antony's students on a WhatsApp group from April 2021 to May 2023. They did not discuss the situation at their school every day. However, there was always something that reignited the discussion.

The article begins by providing the methodology and the analytic framework employed and then proceeds with a short and succinct historical note on St. Antony's. What triggered the conversation on this particular WhatsApp group of former students of St. Antony's is narrated followed by a critical analysis of the conversation.

### **Methodology and Analytic Framework**

This article is framed by the author's familiarity with St. Antony's Catholic Secondary School since 1976 and conversations of the school's former boys on a WhatsApp group. I did my secondary school education at St. Antony's. I then underwent Marian formation, within the school premises at the Juniorate which was transformed into a noviciate. After my initial teacher education as a Marian scholastic, I came back to St. Antony's to teach History and Religious Education. Having not made my final vows, I separated from the Brothers in 1991. In 2022, I visited St. Antony's and checked on my former dormitory. I was, to say the least, numbed by the shock of seeing the deplorable state of the dormitory and the crowding inside. To me the whole school needed a face lift.

This is a qualitative paper, which requires interpreting a conversation on a WhatsApp group of men (176) who had gone to St. Antony's Catholic Mission School between 1973 and 2000. There is also, on the group, one or two former St. Antony's teachers. The chat group was formed in 2017 and I became part of it in 2019 because some students I had taught invited me to join the group. Thus, I did not intrude the group. When the incident of assault happened, I was fascinated by the discussion on the chat group and found it a site for research on an area I have currently begun to explore, namely, the Catholic Church in post-missionary times in Zambia. Because the case of alleged assault at St. Antony's came to be known by the public in the country, I felt it would be useful to "listen" to the former students' feelings when they began to discuss the matter on the chat group. Not all former students of St. Antony's on the WhatsApp group participated in the conversation; only a few of them who have been assigned pseudonyms to protect their identity posted their opinions. Sérgio Barbosa and Stefania Milan (2019: 50) have, in relation to chat groups asked the following question: "How can we safeguard the ethics of research, protecting user privacy and respecting the intimacy of their exchanges, while simultaneously taking advantage of such rich data source?" As mentioned pseudonyms have been used, but "a chat app creates a situation that it is not really possible to inform every group participant about the

ongoing observation, let alone to remind each of it; ensuring ‘informed’ consent is probably just wishful thinking in very large groups” (Barbosa and Milan, 2019: 50).

The conversation started in March 2021 and went on to 2023; abandoned and rekindled by any information about an occurrence or activity at the school or when an Alumni Association of a different school, especially a Catholic school donated money or materials such as desks, paint and computers to their former school. The usual comment when that happened was *utunesu* (Look at our friends!).

The single incident of a 17 year old Grade 12 boy assaulting a 13 year old Grade 9 student in 2021 opened up a Pandora’s Box of undesirables at St. Antony’s. A WhatsApp platform conversation provided primary data, which required interpretation so as to fully understand what was being discussed and debated. Simpson’s ethnography provides empirical solid information, which has assisted in making sense of the post-missionary situation of St. Antony’s. Furthermore, the article has profited from a surfeit of publications on the history of Catholic education in Zambia by Brendan Carmody, an Irish Jesuit priest who worked in the country for thirty-three years (Carmody, 2021). Reliability and trustworthiness of the data in this article were assured by my visit to St. Antony’s in 2022 and interviews with four African Marian Brothers in 2024 in the process of writing up the essay. They too have been given pseudonyms.

The article employs both analytical and descriptive methods, while the Missiological theory of Henry Venn (1796-1873) and Rufus Anderson (1796-1880) about indigenisation of churches serves as the analytic tool of what is a qualitative analysis of the conversation of former students of St. Antony’s. Venn was the Secretary of the Church Missionary Society in the United Kingdom from 1841 to 1872, while Anderson was the Secretary of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission (Hastings, 1994). The Missiological theory makes the fundamental statement that missionaries are meant, from the outset, to provide teaching, pastoral care, sacraments, buildings, finances, and leadership training to local converts to take over these responsibilities. Put differently, Missiological theory states that regarding the ultimate objective of a mission, viewed under its ecclesiastical aspect, is to be the settlement of a native Church, under native pastors, upon a self-supporting system (Farrimond, 2003). In the final analysis, the concept of Indigenous church emerged as the central construct of Venn and Rufus’s mission theory with Venn emphasising that a church is judged to be Indigenous when it is self-propagating, self-financing, and self-governing (Three Selves).

The mission was the scaffolding that would be removed when the building was complete. The missionaries were not part of the Church they built; they would move on “to the regions beyond” as soon as the Church was strong enough. This “euthanasia” was, however, delayed, in every mission, for far longer than Venn especially had anticipated (Sanneh, 1983 and 1989). For sake



of clarity, the Marian Brothers are not a church, but an organisation in the Catholic Church. However, the missiological theory neatly fits the situation of the Brothers who established St. Antony's, trained local Brothers to take over the school and moved on to build another in the north-western part of Zambia, which they also handed over to the local Brothers to run and one after the other, they returned to Europe. The implicit questions in relation to the missiological theory in this article are, does the reason for today's situation at St. Antony's pivot on the fact that the European Brothers did not properly hand over following the lines of Venn's ideal of transition from mission to local church? How is it that some of the more traditionally called mission schools in the country have maintained the good standards left behind by missionaries? If the European Brothers knew that they would one day leave their schools in the hands of the Africans, how did they prepare them to sustain the standards of the school?

This essay is situated in scholarship on Catholic education which addresses issues of lack of knowledge of, and commitment to, Catholic beliefs and values among Catholic educational administrators, school managers, teachers, and other staff, as well as the diminishing percentage of even nominally Catholic staff. Other issues are discipline, Catholic identity, academic performance, sustainability and financial challenges, curricula, catechesis, and inadequate number of clergy and religious serving in schools, *etcetera*.<sup>1</sup>

### **A Historical Note on St. Antony's**

The establishment of Catholic Schools is part of the mission of the Catholic Church as documented in the Second Vatican Council and declared on 28 October 1965 by Pope Paul VI in a document called *Gravissimum*, which became the Declaration on Christian Education (Ezeh, 2022: 140). From the beginning, Catholic mission schools in Africa and elsewhere were part of the Catholic Church's mission of evangelisation and conversion of the local people to Catholicism (See, e.g, Carmody, 2016; 2015; 2014; 2012; 1999; 1992; Omenka, 1989; Simpson, 2003a and Simpson, 2003b). The Missionaries of Africa popularly known as White Fathers introduced Catholicism in the northern parts of Zambia in 1891.

St Antony's was founded by the Marian Brothers as Simpson calls them; they had come from the Marian province of Iberville in Canada. They had earlier built a school in Southern Rhodesia, presently Zimbabwe before Bro. Paul Constant came to Zambia to build St. Antony's. According to Hugo Hinfelaar (2004: 172), the Marian Brothers came to the Lusaka Archdiocese in 1959. They were invited by Bishop Adam Kozłowiecki and Fr. Colm O'Riordan to open a secondary

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<sup>1</sup> Some of these issues were discussed at an International Office of Catholic Education (OIEC in French) conference of 2019 in New York. See, Cattaro, G., Richard, P., and Wodon, Q (2021). Challenges and Opportunities for Catholic Schools Globally: Insights from OICEC's World Congress, *Journal of Catholic Education*, 24(1), 239-251. <https://dx.doi.org/10.15365/joce.2401132021> (Accessed on 1 September 2024).

school for boys near the present day Kabwe town formerly known as Broken Hill in what is today Central Province of Zambia. In 1969, four Brothers of the Marian Province in Spain arrived in Zimbabwe and in 1973, they relocated to St. Antony's to join the French Canadians who, in 1974, due to their falling numbers back home, handed over the school to the Spanish Brothers. By 1983 the last French Canadian Brother left Zambia.

By 2005, St. Antony's was in the hands of an African Marian headmaster. In 2006, the Spanish Brothers finished building a day secondary school for both boys and girls on the Copperbelt. An African Brother became the headmaster. He later came to St. Antony's but went back to the Copperbelt in the same capacity. In the hands of the Black Zambian Brothers, according to former students on the WhatsApp conversation being analysed, the academic results of St. Antony's took a downward turn and indiscipline seemed to have become part of the school's ethos. In 2021, the problem of indiscipline came to public attention when a son of a Member of Parliament assaulted another boy.

It can be argued that generally, since its establishment, St. Antony's has been a peaceful and safe school with occasional non-destructive riots. What has led to thefts and unruly behaviour will need to be thoroughly investigated. This paper merely serves as a beginning of a conversation on the state of the school in doing so to add a voice to that of the former boys who are urging other former students to contribute money towards rehabilitating that they describe as having been one of the best in Zambia and the best in Central Province.

### **Sparking the Conversation on a WhatsApp Group**

Two incidents fanned the conversation on the WhatsApp group discussion of the prevailing situation at St. Antony's. The first and the main incident was, more broadly, mockery, which had resulted in the assault of a Grade 9 student, Mapalo Simwaba. The second incident, much later in 2023, was the death of one of the Spanish Brothers who had been headmaster at the school between 1995 and 2003. He died in his home country and was buried there, but some former boys went for the memorial mass at St. Antony's. Moyo, in the diaspora and arguably one of the former students striving to mobilise funds for the school, asked those who went to the memorial mass to report what they had seen and what they made of the school. "What did you see and what has changed?" he asked. On April 3, 2023, Don listed what he referred to as "Changes at St. Antony's", namely: 1). The infrastructure is generally, dilapidated to a level where even tiles in the dining halls have come out. You cannot eat from those dining halls. 2). Dormitories are dirty. We took a tour of the school from 16 to 18 hours. Almost all the beds were not spread [made] – a culture very different from ours when we were there. 3). The premises were not clean. A lot of grass around the hostels. Students no longer slash the surroundings.

To explain the first incident on which the article is anchored; on 19 March 2021, one of the parents of a boy at St. Antony's posted a recording to a WhatsApp group of parents of students at the school in which he expressed his disappointment with the management of the school and the behaviour of "children from certain families at the school" as he called them. The recording was also posted by some parent (likely a former student) to the St. Antony's group that is being referred to in this article. In his angry monologue, the parent whose child had been beaten, started by disclosing himself, "Good evening fellow parents of St. Antony's. My name is Simwaba Paul. I am one of the parents having a child in this school. My son is Mapalo Simwaba." He then went to say the following:

My son got his first entry into the school by merit – after leaving Milestone School in Kabwe. In the first one month, we had reports of him losing K4, 000.00 (US \$148) worth of groceries through theft. Children from other sections of society, children from other homes, stole his groceries. We aired our complaints on this platform and teachers who are on the forum saw our complaints, but nothing was done to resolve the issue. In the second term, when I was picking my son from school, we found him with swollen lips. He was badly beaten; he was bleeding and I asked him why he was beaten. My son had refused to carry the trunk of a Grade 12 from the furthest dormitory to the front of the school. What the Grade 12 boy did was to punch him in the face. .... I posted that on the group and complained to the school authority. This matter wasn't addressed.

Today [2021], my child is in Grade 9. Today a terrible situation has happened. My son was badly beaten to an extent of having his teeth; two of them uprooted. ... According to my understanding, St. Antony's is a learning institution. It is not a battle ground.... I want to blame the management of this school for hiding certain information because my son was brutally beaten at 23 hours and I was only communicated to the following day at 11:45 hours. This is not good. ... (AUD 20210319-WAO, 19 March 2021).

The WhatsApp Audio from Mr. Simwaba caused an avalanche of comments on the school by former students who singled out the African Brothers for lashing. A number of themes emerged from the discussion. They are identified and systematically analysed below.

### **Themes from the WhatsApp Conversation**

Identified themes are poor academic performance; poor management of the school; corruption; dilapidation and dirt; and weak Alumni. The case of Mapalo was clearly mockery or bullying. According to his father, he was badly beaten in Grade 8 and he was again beaten in Grade 9. Did the boy bear a pre-existing behavioural problem that made his parents send him to St. Antony's so that he could benefit from discipline offered in a Catholic school? Whatever the case, on the WhatsApp group as the conversation progressed, poor results, poor administration of the school, infrastructure dilapidation, congestion in the dormitories, and the school's loss of its past glory surfaced. In 2023, during the memorial mass of the Brother who had been a headmaster at St.

Antony's some former students posted messages of utter disappointment and disbelief of the state of the school; stimulating more discussion.

### **Mockery: A Rite of Passage at St. Antony's**

At St. Antony's, Simpson, examined mockery using Arnold Van Gennep's notion of *rite de passage*, which marks the transition from childhood to adulthood. A child passing through the stage of being a non-person to that of being a person to take up his or her responsibility in the community (Rasing, 1995). Simpson analysed mockery at St. Antony's according to the three-phases – separation, marginal, and aggregation as conceptualised by Van Gennep who (cited by Rasing, 1995: 35) pointed out that the boundaries were dangerous and society was made up of a series of social boundaries between categories so that the social life of individuals can be seen as a series of transitions as individuals change their status. Van Gennep, therefore, went on to explain that transitions are accompanied by rituals such as the rite of passage.

To Simpson, the first stage is the 'physical suffering and humiliation' that the Grade 8 suffers at the hands of mostly, grade nines away from his home. The Grade 8 is socially invisible, his personal name neither known nor used. He is referred to as *kwiyo* or *zeze*<sup>2</sup>. Threats, humiliation and 'beatings' deny the Grade 8 the status of being fully human (Simpson, 2003a: 126). *Kwiyos* or *ba zeze* were said to be slaves, at the beck and call of others, sent on errands by senior students and given tasks for superiors such as carrying their plates and washing their plates (Simpson, 2003a: 127). Stage two, the marginal phase or liminality as Victor Turner (1974) calls it, is 'the stage of speech' when the Grade 8 was made to give a speech about himself and his family in his wing of the dormitory at night. He was made to do so in his underwear. According to Simpson, this was part of acceptance and incorporation into the house [and the whole school it may be added] as long as the delivery of the biographical speech in English was successful (Simpson, 2003b: 127-134). The Grade 8 was asked questions about his family, girlfriends, former primary school and whether or not he had genuinely passed to come to St. Antony's.

Stage three was marked by "Cutting of the tails" of *ba zeze*. The Grade 8, as a *zeze*, had an invisible tail. During the course of the school year, the student body decided upon the date of the final rite, which proved the social acceptance, and hence, incorporation, of the Grade 8 students (Simpson, 2003b: 134). At the time Simpson did his fieldwork, the cutting of tails was on the first day of April (Fool's Day). Previously, in the history of the school, it had been done at the end of the year.

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<sup>2</sup> These are bullying or mocking terms used in all schools in Zambia. Their precise meaning is not known. In my search, etymologically is a Swahili word referring to some traditional music instrument while *Kwiyo* has to do with music as well. A Grade 8 could be made to sing or made to play an imaginary and sing. Overall, the *Kwiyo* or *Zeze* was non-human to manipulate. Only after his invisible tail had been cut did he become human.

When on 19 March 2021, the audio of Mr. Simwaba complaining about the beating of his Grade 9 son by a Grade 12 pupil was heard on a WhatsApp group of former St. Antony's students, Clint one of the members of the group reacted first, "What has happened to the discipline that the school was once known for? The boy who beat up Mapalo was described as "savage and primitive". To the former students, school is a civilising tool. Because school managers were implicated in the incident, Clarence called for the immediate removal of the headmaster.

The school administration has a different account of what happened. The offender, a grade 12 pupil was fast asleep when some grade 8s and 9s began to make noise in the dormitory. The offender woke up and made the noise makers to squat down as punishment. Mapalo pleaded with the senior student not to punish him as he was not making noise himself, but the senior boy, who had a problem with anger management pushed Mapalo to the ground, resulting into broken teeth (Headmaster, Mobile phone conversation, 23<sup>rd</sup> September, 2024). Interesting though, when the school management invited Mr. Simwaba to take away his child from St. Antony's after the incident, he (Mr. Simwaba) refused to do so and apologised to the school management for his misleading WhatsApp audio. He went on to reconcile with the parents of the grade 12 student who was suspended. It would seem, going by the decision taken by Mr. Simwaba, that 'Santos' as St. Antony's is also nicknamed by the former students, remains an inspirational dream school despite the problems it was facing. It is at St. Antony's that the former students' dreams of what they imagined education would deliver were after school fulfilled (Simpson, 2009).

### **Falling Academic Standards**

In a conference paper, Fr. Robert Lavertu, a member of the Missionaries of Africa popularly known as White Fathers pointed out that:

... In Zambia, Catholic secondary schools always have had a good reputation since the beginnings in the 1950s, when they were administered by expatriate missionaries. Among other achievements, they are known to offer the best results at the Grade 12 exams, often in the area of 90% success. Today, these same schools are run by a complete Zambian staff of religious and lay teachers, and they achieve the same good results. ... (Lavertu, 2016: 5-6).

In this article, some former students of St. Antony's doubted the capabilities of the Zambian Marian Brothers in relation to producing outstanding results of 90% success.

Falling academic standards at St. Antony's were attributed largely to indiscipline, which the Brothers had purportedly failed to manage. Casam argued, "This explains the pathetic academic performance of our beloved and esteemed "Santos". And this nonsense cannot continue as long as we are still alive." Incidentally, the conversation on the poor standing of St. Antony's, in the eyes of the former students had actually started in 2020 when the Grade 9 results were published by the Ministry of Education. Casam posted the rankings of schools in Zambia in terms of their

academic performance at Grade 9 level in 2020 and St. Antony's was number 79. It was not certain whether or not the headmaster of the school was on the group or not, but some of the former students seemed to have been in possession of his mobile phone number for the obvious reason that they could ask him to secure for them a place in the school for their child or a relative. Justin posted the following question to the headmaster: "The old students are asking if the above ranking is a true position. If it is, what are the measures that the administration is taking to bring it back to the top ten?"

This particular WhatsApp group of former students consists of successful men in life; among them politicians, academicians, doctors, successful farmers, businessmen, teachers, academics, executives in private companies, bankers, chief financial officers, directors in government departments, serving and retired Army and Air Force Generals, and high ranking officers in the Zambia Correctional Services, and others. Some of the former students are working overseas. Peter made a proposal that a committee of educationists and enthusiasts should be constituted to look into the matter and propose remedial measures to St. Antony's. Jackson replied in support:

... I suppose we can write a diplomatic letter to the school expressing our grave concern at the performance of Santos [St. Antony's] and our desire to work with the school to recover its glory.

It was further suggested by Casam that the former boys' committee should meet teachers and the school managers in relation to academic performance. For some reason(s) the idea of a committee did not materialise. It may have been because of this comment from Patrick, "Are we a recognised body that the school is answerable to like for instance, the PTA [Parents Teachers Association]?"

In April 2023, the conversation on the problem of poor performance at St. Antony's resurfaced and this time, the introduction of girls back in 1990 became one reason for the poor results. Some of the former boys argued that the introduction of girls had contributed to poor results. They did not explain how. However, Oliver, a retired Headmaster posted a contrary view as follows:

I want to submit that St. Antony's is still very competitive. On the contrary, the introduction of girls and the primary school was from the Marian Brothers to improve access to education by the local community at an affordable fee. ... The introduction of girls was aimed at ensuring that girls around St. Antony's have an opportunity to earn an education of high standard and quality like ourselves did.

In Simpson's ethnography, the general and most widely shared public attitude towards girls and women in the formerly all-male school environment was extremely negative. Former students told Simpson that the introduction of girls had "contaminated" the school. Additionally, many male students and male teachers alike attributed the decline in examination performance solely to the presence of girls (Simpson, 2003b: 25). Nevertheless, the European Brothers insisted on admitting girls as day-scholars. The Brothers undertook the task of sensitising local people – parents, boys

and girls that St. Antony's would welcome boys and girls from the surrounding area to enrol in the primary and the secondary school. Oliver was particularly sympathetic to the Brothers policy of enrolling girls in the school, because "at St. Antony's, the Brothers, dedicated to the Virgin Mary, strove in some respects to be like her. Because of this, they tried to bring more female students into the school" (Simpson, 2003b).

In his 2013 fieldwork on Catholic schools in Zambia, Carmody was told in interviews with headmasters and teachers as well as church administrators that examination results measured the school's success. And when he asked a bishop how he viewed the value of the Catholic school, he responded by saying that it provided better education as evidenced through its place in the national results league table (Carmody, 2014: 65). The net effect of this, according to Carmody, is that because of the overarching concern with lucrative and prestigious employment, even where schools have leeway to act autonomously in selecting students from less privileged environments, they move slowly if at all. This happens because it is perceived to mean accepting less qualified students with the result that such students are likely to take more of the teachers' time and ultimately do less well academically (Carmody, 2016: 15 and 2015: 6).

### **Poor School Management Skills**

This is a broad theme and it seemed to have been believed or suspected to be at the root of all the problems at St. Antony's. First of all, Levy asked, "Are the Marian Brothers still in charge?" Mwendalubi came in and said, "St. Antony's and the other Marian schools are being run by Zambian Brothers. They seem not to have been properly trained in the principles under which the school should operate." These former students may not know all the principles that guided the Marian Brothers in running their school, but they recalled order, discipline, and academic rigour. To Mwendalubi and the rest of the former boys, poor management of the school is what had brought St. Antony's to where it is today. He argued thus:

The Zambian Marian Brothers have failed to collaborate with the mother organisation in either Canada or Spain to continue promoting the ideals for which Bro. Paul founded the school. Also, what is going on at St. Antony's is a result of government interference in the running of the school. The Jesuits at Canisius have not tolerated that and the academic standards are still high there.

There are four fundamental points that Mwendalubi raised in the statement above. Firstly, is the lack of leadership in the African Brothers; secondly, is the absence of Catholic character at the school; thirdly, government interference; and fourthly, lack of collaboration between the local Brothers and the European ones. In light of the school lacking the Catholic outlook among administrators and teachers, Carmody (2014) has established that, there is a renewed consciousness of the need for the Catholic school to be better aligned with the ideals of its Catholic sponsors although things are slow. As regards government interference, historically, the church grant-aided school, as opposed to private school in Zambia, lost much of its autonomy

when after independence in 1964 the Ministry of Education continued to direct the schools (Carmody, 2014: 57).

### **Corruption**

Duke argued: “There has been too much corruption reported at the school for some years now. With the exit of European Brothers, things got into Zed hands (Zambian Brothers), and everything nosedived.” Duke insisted on corruption as the reason for the falling standards at St. Antony’s. He further argued:

... There has been too much corruption there since the White Brothers left. These Zambian Brothers who have come, have not only failed the school but caused embarrassment to all of us. The school has been our pride as alumni.

No one paid attention to Duke’s insistence on the problem of corruption. He had no evidence of it at all. He had at face value taken the following statement, “My son got his first entry into the school by merit. ... He managed to get into the school after leaving Milestone School in Kabwe” made by Mr. Simwaba as evidence.

Duke interpreted the above statements in this way, “Like the affected brother [Mr. Simwaba] stated in the audio recording yesterday, it appears that a good number of learners now, do not get admitted on the basis of academic merit but financial merit, let alone status.” Whatever the case, Mr. Simwaba’s othering comment, which did not only have to do with academic performance but also of some boys from other families stealing from his son seems to suggest that St. Antony’s is mainly for children of the elite from private schools.

### **Dilapidation in the School**

In February 2023, one of the European Brothers who had served as headmaster at the school, died in his home country. He came to Zambia in 1983 and went back to Spain in 2021, due to ill-health. When he became the headmaster in 1995, he embarked on rehabilitating the school and he is remembered for that. Consequently, when he left to build another Marian school (opened in 2006) on the Copperbelt, the PTA at St. Antony’s built a dormitory and named it after him. According to Dennis in the diaspora, the departure of the Brother in 2005, marked the beginning of decay, poor results, indiscipline and dirt at St. Antony’s. This observation seems to have been confirmed by the former students who went to attend the Brother’s memorial mass at St. Antony’s as has earlier been explained. On April 3, 2023, responding to Moyo’s request, Don had listed the following changes at St. Antony’s: 1). Dilapidated infrastructure. 2). Dirty dormitories. 3) Unmade beds. 4). Dirty and unkempt premises.

Don also posted that, “The administration system seems to have collapsed. ...” Don’s “report” stimulated nostalgia among the former students; they recalled House and School inspections on



Sundays. Mwendalubi commented, "...This Zambianisation<sup>3</sup> of the Marian Brothers has been a big embarrassment. A general problem for Africa in anything that we have taken over." To Sanford, the PTA had to be blamed because its members did not want their children at the school to do manual work, which they equated to child labour. Generally, students in Zambia speak approvingly of Catholic schools' ethos and what they appear to treasure is emphasis on order – desks, teaching materials, clean and well-kept surroundings and supervision of teachers, which they contrast with what occurs in the state-run schools (Carmody, 2014: 65). Carmody is not talking about the time when Catholic mission schools were in the hands of expatriates, but now in the hands of Africans. What has happened at St. Antony's? It was learned that the majority of students are from towns and well to do families and refuse to do manual work.

Moyo who had asked his colleagues that had made it to the requiem mass to report what they had seen at the school came back to the discussion and said:

... Last year [2022], I recommended St. Antony's to a friend. He went there and toured the dormitories and the classrooms. He called me from St. Antony's, very angry calling me a joker. I was ashamed and I refunded his fuel expense.

Don also shared an earlier experience he had while in the company of some parents and the headmaster took them around the school premises. He explained to the parents that because students did not pay anything to the school, tools such as slashers, rakes, hoes and lawn mowers could not be bought.

It should be pointed out that the Marian Brothers do seek assistance from overseas and within the country, especially from the Alumni. It is not expected that they will always succeed to secure funds, and when they do, it is for a particular project in the school. To find money that can enable the Brothers to overhaul the infrastructure in the school after many years of natural decay is not quite easy, but as González (2019: 9) opines, "My opinion and option is that Castilla-Compostela has a moral and institutional responsibility to keep alive its historical commitment to Zambia-Mission, now Southern Africa." Exactly, Bro Chansa had the following to say, "When we became part of Southern Africa province, we felt abandoned by the European Brothers. However, we do receive monetary help for needy children and some projects, but the economic challenges are still many. The Brothers abroad demand accountability and transparency and these are key to securing funding" (Bro Chansa, Mobile phone conversation, 24 September, 2024). Bro. Ngosa, when asked if he felt abandoned by the European Brothers responded: "We still communicate with our Brothers in Spain and they do help us when they can, but overall,

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<sup>3</sup> This is a term often used to describe the situation of indigenous Zambians taking over jobs that were done by expatriates. The word has a political overtone because it was the vogue after Zambia's independence as the first president, Kenneth Kaunda embarked on nationalising the country's assets in private corporations or companies. Nationalisation went hand in hand with Zambianisation.

they look at us as a province of Southern Africa and we should look after ourselves” (Bro. Ngosa, Mobile phone conversation, 26 September 2024).

### **Weak Alumni Association**

Catholic schools in Zambia tend to have weak Alumni associations and for the most part, there is still relatively little follow-up on past students (Carmody, 2014: 67). Some former students of St. Antony’s blamed themselves for the situation obtaining at their former school. Moyo in particular argued that while the school had a plan, there was a lack of philanthropy from the former boys. Mwiinga concurred, “I agree with you that we should do more, but the current administration and current parents need to carry the primary burden.” Moyo retorted, “Well, let us implement the secondary plan, which is micro projects.” Rashford, working for the Ministry of Education in a town thirty-three kilometres from St. Antony’s posted: “Good afternoon colleagues, I don’t think this is an emergency matter. Let us just leave the Ministry of Education to handle this issue since it is a government matter together with the Brothers.” Quite clearly, Rashford’s comment suggested dependency and Petros countered: “We hear you loud and clear, but we are still obligated to do something.” However, Dennis from the diaspora argued, “as a group, our fund-raising success rate is very poor. I don’t see this changing soon.” Dennis volunteered no reason.

The conversation relating to the school in the month of May 2023 was about water reticulation and sanitation at St. Antony’s. Some Alumni members on a different WhatsApp group had paid a company to assess the water and sanitation situation at the school. In the report of 14 May 2023, the company recommended the following:

The Alumni to consider admonishing the school management to resolve all that can be resolved i.e., closing up leaking points, unblocking drainages and many others by their maintenance team before we attend to that which they cannot do.

The company, which seemed to be owned by a former St. Antony’s student also indicated the following:

The school management has dropped the bar on cleanliness. The dormitory and dining areas are in a very bad state. The staff [Housemasters] and their prefects are not working at all. Routine inspections are a thing of the past. The Manpower [punishment] sessions that used to clean up the school are no longer there.

Who takes responsibility for the weak Alumni association at St. Antony’s? Both the school administration and the Alumni may be blamed. Given the galaxy of luminaries of the former students, it should not be too difficult for the Alumni to come up with a model of self-financing for the school. The school administration could come up with a way of keeping the Alumni abreast with what is going at St. Antony’s. To that end, there ought to be an Alumni link person in the school.

### **How St. Antony's came to be under Local Brothers**

In giving the background to local Brothers, something must be said about how they came to be in charge of the school. According to Simpson (2003a), the Canadian Brothers in Zambia made an early attempt at recruitment, which came to nothing. In 1962, four years after their first arrival in Zambia, to establish St. Antony's, the Brothers constructed and opened a formation house with accommodation for about fifteen candidates. The house, known locally as the Juniorate, was situated in an area of the mission compound that was set apart from the school and where the Brothers' residence and the Catholic chaplain's house were located. One Brother was in charge of the candidates – four or five, who had expressed some desire to join the Brothers, although at this time, there was no formal programme of recruitment. After the official opening of the Juniorate, eight schoolboy aspirants transferred from the dormitories to the newly completed Juniorate. Not a single one of them became a Brother. One Marian Brother told Simpson, "They were more interested in the advantages, especially with regard to their studies, than anything else. One by one, they started to leave" (Simpson, 2003a: 378).

At the beginning of the 1980s, the interest in attracting vocations to Catholic religious life in the country was renewed (Simpson, 2003a: 379). In 1981, three of the four young men who undertook Marian formation were former St. Antony's students. In 1983, all four took the vows of Marian Brotherhood, but they left years later. In subsequent years, the European Brothers managed to recruit young men from different parts of the country to join Marian life. As of 2023, there were 14 local Brothers but two of them were working outside Zambia.

Before the African and European Brothers, the French-Canadians had managed to keep enrolments at St. Antony's to manageable levels. According to Simpson (2003b: 54), the French-Canadian Brothers managed to fend off an early attempt to encourage all schools in Zambia to increase drastically student numbers. Their argument was that numbers in excess of 400 would make it impossible to carry out their primary aims which they had identified in 1968, namely, giving education to boys to work for the Church in helping the formation of Christians and getting recruits to perpetuate the Church in Zambia.

As already pointed out, in 1974, the Spanish officially took over control of the school from their French counterparts. According to Simpson (2003b: 54),

The school continued to be successful, both on the sports field and in the examinations room, which added the pressure on enrolment, especially from better-off Zambians, and created a great gap between the school and local people, very few of whose children were admitted as students.

This situation made the Brothers reflect on and debate their relevance at St. Antony's as Simpson illuminates:

Some Spanish Marian Brothers found the nature of ‘Catholic’ school in contemporary, postcolonial Zambia problematic. They wondered about their presence and their goals and felt a tension: should they remain at St. Antony’s or start another mission elsewhere, among ‘the poorest of the poor?’ The Brothers, among themselves, constantly debated the purpose of their work, and defended different perspectives, different concepts of ‘mission’ and ‘presence’ (Simpson, 2003b: 14).

If as noted, the European and North American Brothers kept the number of students in the school to acceptable levels, one of the African Brothers who have served as headmasters at St. Antony’s reversed the policy, which the European Brothers had come up with, namely, to de-congest the school and as much as possible by enrolling local boys and girls as day scholars. The Brothers even sourced funding to buy bicycles for students walking long distances to St. Antony’s. The plan to decongest the boarding went hand in hand with a creation of a primary school, St. Antony’s primary school. Some dormitories were consequently converted into classrooms for the primary school. In March 1998 the primary school was officially opened in the designated St. Antony’s dormitories with a Zambian Marian Brother as headmaster (González, 2019 and Simpson, 2003b). González contends that:

The Brothers [Africans] should not abandon what those [Europeans] who have gone left behind. Our goal was to have three hundred boarders and two hundred day scholars, and we wanted to have as many girls as possible in the school. ... What the Brothers can do now is to have a quarter allocation of grade eights to the primary school and the entry points for day scholars should not be the same as that of boarders (Spontaneous sharing from Gonzáles after his visit to the school, 15 September, 2024)

There is evidence that the presence of Catholic schools in communities – historical or current, may have benefits for communities as a whole (Wodon, 2019: 135-153). According to Mwenya (2008) the initiative of creating a primary school by the Brothers at St. Antony’s was very highly praised and appreciated by the local people.

As mentioned already, the African Marian Headmaster in the secondary school probably under pressure from the PTA and the Ministry of Education, introduced bunk beds in the dormitories or hostels so that there would be more students in the school after three blocks of dormitories had been converted into a primary school. In 2022, there were 800 students in the secondary school, only a few of them were day scholars. This was phenomenal because the highest number of learners that the school has ever recorded during the time of expatriate Brothers is 500. Brother Ngosa regretted the situation in these words, “We lost it – the policy of the European Brothers was abandoned. In fact, we enrolled more pupils in the boarding than ever before. We even built new class rooms and dormitories. We bear the blame” (Mobile phone conversation, 26 September, 2024). Along the lines of Brother Ngosa, Moyo posted on the chat group on 31 July 2024 when he visited the school, “A new row of classrooms has been added behind the old grade 11-12 classrooms to accommodate an influx of kids.”

The biggest challenge the African Brothers face is a chronic lack of money to maintain the school infrastructure. The annual Government grant oscillates between K106, 000-00(US\$ 3, 926-00) and K160, 000-00 (US\$ 5,926-00) per quarter and it goes to cover recurrent operating expenses. Parents also pay K3, 100-00 (US\$ 115.00) per term towards food for their children in the boarding. Clearly, the Brothers do not seem to have means of generating money for themselves and the school. Also, in the past ten years, they have suffered a “dry spell” of vocations to Marian Brotherhood, which has its own implications on the pastoral aspect of their work at St. Antony’s.

### **Conclusion**

The conversation of the former St, Antony’s captured nearly all the issues being discussed in the academic study of Catholic education including; Catholic identity, enrolments, moral and infrastructure decay, poor academic performance of learners, quality of teachers, learning environment, management of schools, diminishing numbers of religious personnel, *etcetera*. The situation at St. Antony’s presents some interesting questions, not least of which is whether the Brothers in Europe could do more to assist their counterparts to get weaned off dependency on foreign initiative, foreign money, and foreign personnel. The situation also makes a perceptive observer to ask: What is the point about having more and more students in a school of a capacity of 400 and less so after the creation of the primary school out of some dormitories?

The argument that the Brothers at St. Antony’s were not trained is contestable. It may be argued that most likely, “They seem not to have been trained” implies not having been prepared to manage a Marian school. It is noted that none of the African Brothers deputised under a European headmaster. In short, they were not mentored. Thus, it is possible that African Brothers have lacked mentorship because they were simply appointed as headmasters because a Marian Brother had to be headmaster of a Marian School.

Henry Venn and Rufus Anderson’s theory remains relevant to the situation at St. Antony’s. It is a perfect lens through which to examine the problem at St. Antony’s. The expatriate Brothers had built a beautiful boarding school including a full size Catholic chapel on the premises, cosy staff houses, a Juniorate, which later became a postulancy and a Noviciate, recruited African young men to become Brothers, and educated them to up to PhD level in two cases. However, time came when the European Brothers had to leave St. Antony’s in the hands of the African Brothers, and they did just that – going back to Europe after having started a new mission on the Copperbelt. In the light of the missiological theory, the questions to ask regarding the issues being addressed in the article are: Did the foreign Brothers remove their support too early? Did the foreign Brothers provide scaffolds once they had exited the school? One African Brother argued: “The European Brothers did not have a vision for the Zambian Brothers; they seem not to have had it at the back of their mind that they were going to leave the schools in the hands of the African Brothers. Secondly, when Zambia became part of the province of Southern Africa, the Europeans

were reluctant to be part of the province” (Bro. Changwe, 8 September, 2024). Little remembered, it seems, is that three European Brothers had opted to belong to the new African province (González, 2019), but left Zambia due to illness and relocation to new mission field overseas.

Generally, although the departure of the European Brothers should be understood in the context of what Werner Ustorf (1992) calls the situation of ‘Christianised Africa and De-Christianised Europe’, it has raised hopes among many in Europe and North America that Africa is the place of growth and hope for the renewal of a Western church (Simpson, 2023a: 377). Noted is the fact that the last young European Brother to have come to St. Antony’s albeit briefly was in 1992. There were few young men becoming Brothers in Europe, while Zambia was doing fairly well in this regard.

I argue that the members of the Alumni Association on the WhatsApp group which has been the focus of this essay has some wealthy and also well positioned members in government should reorganise itself and raise money for the school on annual basis. The African Brothers on their part must unequivocally maintain the policy left by European Brothers of reducing the number of students in the boarding by admitting more and more day students. Clearly, local learners affirmative action is a must. If, for some reason, the Brothers feel that they need to boost enrolments in the school, day students should be the option. I further argue as Wodon (2019: 136) does, that boosting enrolment should not be the primary goal of school system. Finally, I also argue that the African Brothers at St. Antony’s are good enough but lack financial capacity to do what the expatriate Brothers did. Inevitably, this article ends with questions: Did the European Brothers abandon the African Brothers in Zambia? Do the African Brothers feel abandoned? What do the European Brothers think about the situation of the African Brothers? Given the affluent situation of the European Brothers, how can they help the Zambian Brothers? Or how can the wealthy Brothers in the global north help the poor Brothers in global south? If the European Brothers knew that they would one day leave their schools in the hands of the Africans, how did they prepare them to sustain the standards? Either the African Brothers were not prepared or they have not been successful in running St. Antony’s.

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## PERCEPCIONES DE LOS FUTUROS PROFESORES SOBRE LA CONFIANZA EN SÍ MISMOS, EN LAS INSTITUCIONES Y EN LA EDUCACIÓN

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**Resumen** En la presente investigación se presentan los resultados de una encuesta realizada a una muestra de 528 estudiantes universitarios de las titulaciones Educación Infantil, Educación Primaria, Pedagogía y Educación Social del Centro de Enseñanza Superior Escuni (Madrid). La variable de estudio es la “confianza” desde una perspectiva esencialmente educativa y el principal objetivo es explorar en qué medida estos estudiantes confían en sí mismos, en el futuro, en la educación y en diversas instituciones y profesionales, así como el grado de satisfacción con sus estudios universitarios. Para medir la confianza personal se han utilizado el cuestionario de Autoeficacia académica general de Torre-Puente (2006) y la Escala de Autoestima de Rosenberg (1965), por sus buenas propiedades psicométricas, así como tres preguntas abiertas formuladas *ad hoc* sometidas éstas a evaluación inter jueces. Estas medidas han permitido llevar a cabo tanto un análisis cualitativo como cuantitativo de las respuestas. Los resultados indican unas puntuaciones moderadamente elevadas en autoestima, autoeficacia y satisfacción con la carrera, así como una valoración muy positiva del sistema sanitario y de los bomberos en cuanto profesionales. Manifiestan confianza en el futuro y creen que la educación puede contribuir en gran medida al cambio personal y social. Se describe cómo conceptualizan la confianza y cuáles son las causas por las que se desconfía de alguien. Además, la caracterización del profesor en quien se puede confiar se asemeja bastante a los rasgos asignados al buen docente.

**Palabras clave** Confianza, Formación inicial del profesorado, Autoestima, Autoeficacia, Satisfacción con la carrera, Poder de la educación.

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**Abstract** This research presents the results of a survey carried out on a sample of 528 university students of Early Childhood Education, Primary Education, Pedagogy and Social Education degrees at the Escuni Higher Education Centre (Madrid). The study variable is 'confidence' from an essentially educational perspective and the main objective is to explore the extent to which these students have confidence in themselves, in the future, in education and in various institutions and professionals, as well as the degree of satisfaction with their university studies. To measure personal confidence, we used Torre-Puente's (2006) General Academic Self-Efficacy questionnaire and Rosenberg's (1965) Self-Esteem Scale, due to their good psychometric properties, as well as three ad hoc open-ended questions submitted to inter-judge evaluation. These measures allowed for both qualitative and quantitative analysis of the responses. The results indicate moderately high scores on self-esteem, self-efficacy and career satisfaction, as well as a very positive appraisal of the health care system and firefighters. They express confidence in the future and believe that education can contribute greatly to personal and social change. They describe how they conceptualize trust and what causes them to mistrust someone. In addition, the characterization of the teacher who can be trusted is quite similar to the traits assigned to a good teacher.

**Key Words** Confidence, Initial Teacher Training, Self-esteem, Self-efficacy, Career Satisfaction, Power of Education.

## Introducción

La confianza juega un papel esencial en una gran variedad de aspectos de la vida humana y se encuentra muy presente en nuestra sociedad: en la política, en la relación entre gestores políticos y ciudadanos (Devine, 2024); en el mundo empresarial y de las marcas comerciales como empresarios y clientes (Mukhtar et al., 2024); en el ámbito de la salud entre sanitarios y pacientes (Miller, 2023); en el dominio de la religión referida a la vinculación con Dios y a la interacción entre fieles y mediadores (Upenieks et al., 2023); en la generalidad de las relaciones interpersonales (en la amistad, en la vida de pareja, en el interior de organizaciones y entidades); en el campo de las instituciones sociales y también, en la educación, especialmente en la continuada relación entre profesores y estudiantes (Luo, 2024). Este autor enfatiza además la necesidad de cultivarla dado que se está erosionando debido a la falta de transparencia que genera la inteligencia artificial. Esta omnipresencialidad no autoriza inmediatamente a hablar de omnicausalidad de la confianza, pero al menos permite situarla en el corazón de la actividad humana. El concepto puede asociarse a esperanza, expectativas, creencias y fe, fidelidad, dependencia, vinculación, seguridad, ánimo, vigor para obrar, familiaridad (Simpson, 2023). Por otro lado, en el hecho de confiar (o de desconfiar) pueden encontrarse, como en otros constructos psicológicos, elementos cognitivos, emocionales y conductuales, fácilmente identificables a través de las expresiones *tener fe (confianza)*, *sentirse confiado* y *actuar con confianza*. No se trata aquí de delimitar tantos matices conceptuales, sino más bien de anotar que estamos ante un "hiperconcepto" con múltiples resonancias e irisaciones (Revuelta-Mediavilla, 2015). Una muy detallada y profunda aproximación a este polifacetismo puede verse en el número 9 de *Educa* -

*International Catholic Journal of Education* (2023) dedicado a *Educating Trust, Educating for Trust*, en donde se aborda la confianza desde las perspectivas teológica, literaria, fenomenológica, sociológica, filosófica y educativa.

En este artículo partimos de la conceptualización de la confianza realizada por Hoy y Tschannen-Moran (1999). Estos autores definen la confianza como una disposición personal a convertirse en vulnerable, basada en una valoración de la benevolencia, fiabilidad, competencia, honestidad y franqueza del otro, cualidades éstas que conforman el llamado “modelo de las cinco facetas”. La *benevolencia* percibida consiste en creer que el propio bienestar o algo importante para uno será protegido por una persona, por un grupo o por una institución de quienes alguien se fía. La fiabilidad tiene que ver con la expectativa de que el otro se comportará consistentemente de una manera altruista y cuidadosa. La *competencia*, o capacidad para llevar a cabo las obligaciones requeridas para desempeñar una función, permite creer que alguien actuará con las habilidades necesarias como para que otro pueda ser ayudado o pueda conseguir algo determinado. En el caso de la enseñanza, los estudiantes confían en que la competencia de sus profesores les permita progresar en su aprendizaje. La *honestidad* se conforma por la veracidad de las explicaciones de las cosas, por la asunción de la propia conducta y por el cumplimiento de lo que se dice que se va a hacer. Y centrándonos en el ámbito de la educación, “la honestidad del docente consiste en ser veraz con uno mismo y con los demás, en manifestar coherencia entre las propias convicciones, actitudes y acciones y en responder de forma acertada a la misión central de la educación, que es ayudar a niños y jóvenes a desarrollarse plenamente” (Torre-Puente y Prieto-Navarro, 2018, p. 292). Finalmente, la *franqueza* o apertura implica la voluntad de compartir información que se sustenta en la creencia recíproca de que el hecho de hacerlo no da ventaja a uno y convierte en vulnerable al otro. Estos cinco componentes de la confianza resultan esenciales en el área de la educación, sea en las relaciones entre profesores y alumnos, entre docentes entre sí, entre la escuela y la familia o entre la administración de la institución escolar y todos los demás grupos.

Desde un punto de vista psicológico, la confianza es la base de las relaciones humanas y del crecimiento personal. El ser humano lo es por su ser en relación ya desde el momento del nacimiento, como sugiere metafóricamente la unión del niño con su madre a través del cordón umbilical. En palabras de Ravasi (2023, p. 23), “la imagen materno-filial nos conduce espontáneamente al segundo perfil de confianza, el del prójimo, del otro, del ser que comparte nuestra misma humanidad, al margen de toda cultura, etnia, geografía y temporalidad”. Esta conexión original con la madre va a consolidarse con el tiempo gracias al cuidado y a la atención personal que fortalecen en el niño la creencia de que es querido y que se encuentra en buenas manos. Poco a poco va a ir desarrollando, o no, una vinculación con las personas de su entorno que le va a permitir sentirse seguro y crecer afectiva y cognitivamente. “La confianza ilimitada en la accesibilidad y apoyo que pueden brindar dichas figuras constituye la base de desarrollo de una personalidad estable y segura de sus propias fuerzas”, esto es, la consolidación de un *apego sereno*,

en términos de Bowlby (1976, p. 347). Esta fortaleza puede también no establecerse o hacerse de una manera deficiente, como pudo apreciarse en el caso de los orfanatos rumanos de la época de Ceaucescu en los años 70 y 80 del pasado siglo (Eagleman, 2017, pp. 18-22). La atención emocional, el cuidado personal, la estimulación cognitiva y el cariño dispensado a los niños, más allá de la mera satisfacción de las necesidades alimentarias y físicas, desempeñan un rol fundamental en el desarrollo cerebral y en el crecimiento humano en general.

Una vez establecida esta primera relación esencial, es preciso continuar navegando de forma adecuada en la arena social. La salud psicológica requiere de los demás en quienes poder confiar y con los que contrastar los propios pensamientos, sentimientos y acciones. Maslow (1954) subraya la necesidad de pertenencia y de amor, es decir, de sentirse miembro de “algo” (una familia, un clan, una comunidad, un grupo determinado...) y de ser aceptado y querido por los demás, a la vez que de apreciarse uno a sí mismo. En este sentido, sostiene que “la satisfacción de la necesidad de autoestima conduce a sentimientos de confianza en uno mismo, valía, fuerza, capacidad y adecuación, de ser útil y necesario en el mundo” (p. 45), poniendo de relieve así la doble vertiente del aprecio personal, la percepción sobre sí mismo y la estimación que uno hace de la percepción de los demás como condicionante de su autoestima. También Bandura (1987), en la formulación de la teoría cognitiva social, resalta la relevancia que los demás tienen en el funcionamiento psicológico de la gente. Muchos de los aprendizajes de la existencia humana se sustentan en actuaciones vicarias y pasan a ser internalizados tras una serie de complejos procesos de atención, representación mental, ejecución y motivación. El modelado puede tener lugar gracias a que las situaciones estimulares a las que el sujeto está expuesto son percibidas y procesadas para generar reglas personales de acción. A esta impronta cognitivo social cabe añadir la capacidad generativa de la autoeficacia (Bandura, 1997), es decir, el poder que “sentirse capaz” de hacer algo aporta a la motivación y acción humanas. La autoeficacia está esencialmente determinada por cuatro fuentes de información: los logros previos de ejecución, la experiencia vicaria, la persuasión verbal y el estado emocional. De ellas, las dos fuentes centrales manan directamente de los demás. Autoestima y autoeficacia, inicialmente creencias referidas al interior del yo y constructoras de confianza cuando son elevadas, están teñidas en sus orígenes y en sus efectos de una fuerte carga social. Una última referencia de la psicología es la que proviene de la teoría de la autodeterminación de Deci y Ryan (2000), para quienes la motivación intrínseca humana viene explicada por la satisfacción de tres necesidades básicas, la autonomía, la competencia y la relación. En este tercer aspecto, en línea con Maslow, sostienen que el ser humano se sentirá más motivado para implicarse en las tareas si percibe un clima adecuado en el que desenvolverse, si se encuentra a gusto emocionalmente con las personas con las que está y si se tiene un sentimiento de pertenencia al grupo. La confianza para lanzarse a la acción reposa en una adecuada relación con los demás de quienes se recibe empatía, atención, afecto genuino y disponibilidad (Silva et al., 2014).

A la escuela, a los colegios y a las universidades llegan los niños y jóvenes que han crecido en un ambiente previo que les ha generado confianza o desconfianza en sí mismos y en los demás. En la etapa universitaria, los estudiantes unen a su trayectoria familiar la específica vivida en el ámbito escolar, que puede compensar las deficiencias construidas o abundar en ellas. Las instituciones educativas son lugares en los que debiera fortalecerse la confianza y minimizarse la desconfianza propia y ajena, aunque no siempre ocurre así. De hecho, estudios como los de Calvo de Mora et al. (2015) indican que los alumnos de educación superior tienen una tendencia a la conformidad, lejos de la confianza hacia el sistema educativo. Es importante generar confianza hacia el sistema educativo, teniendo en cuenta que desempeña un papel crucial en el cultivo de la autoconfianza de los alumnos sobre sí mismos, generando potencial para el progreso cultural.

De todas las relaciones horizontales y verticales que pueden darse en la escuela entre las diversas personas y grupos que componen la comunidad educativa, dos resultan nucleares para incrementar o empequeñecer la fe en uno mismo y en los otros, las existentes entre compañeros y la relación profesor-alumno. Sin desdeñar el impacto de las primeras, en nuestra opinión cobran una especial importancia la segunda por el peso asimétrico que juega cada uno de ellos y por el tiempo de la escolaridad en el que esta desigualdad puede estar operando para bien o para mal. Un estudiante que ingrese en la etapa de Educación Infantil a los tres años y que termine su formación universitaria a los 23, ha pasado en su conjunto en las “instituciones educativas” de diversos niveles 20 años de su vida, en torno a un cuarto de su existencia. El cómputo en horas, 5 al día por 200 días/año, llega a las 20.000, una cantidad nada despreciable para construir o no a una persona. Bankole (2011) sostiene que no se ha estudiado en profundidad la percepción de la confianza que los estudiantes tienen en los profesores como elemento esencial en el establecimiento de relaciones significativas entre ambos. Sin embargo, según el Estudio de Opinión Pública sobre Universitarios en España realizado por la Fundación BBVA en 2023, los estudiantes universitarios muestran altos niveles de confianza hacia profesiones vinculadas al conocimiento y la formación, como los científicos, ingenieros, médicos y, sin duda, los maestros.

Este estudio pretende contribuir a este conocimiento: ¿Qué entiende el alumno por confianza? ¿Confía en el docente? ¿En el sistema educativo? ¿Tienen confianza en la educación como motor de cambio? ¿Cuál es su percepción de confianza sobre diversos profesionales e instituciones? ¿Se encuentran a gusto con su experiencia universitaria? ¿Cómo son los docentes en quienes se confía? ¿Por qué se pierde la confianza?

A continuación intentaremos dar respuesta a las incógnitas planteadas.

### **Metodología empleada**

El *objetivo principal* de esta investigación ha sido explorar la confianza que los estudiantes de Educación Primaria, Educación Infantil, Educación Social y Pedagogía, tienen en sí mismos, hacia

diversas profesiones y en algunas instituciones sociales, así como indagar acerca de cómo se sienten de satisfechos con su periodo de formación universitaria y hasta qué punto tienen fe en la educación y en el futuro.

El examen de estas percepciones se justifica porque la acción psicológica del ser humano está condicionada por lo que las personas creen que es la realidad en mayor medida que por lo que ella sea en sí misma (Bandura, 1997). En multitud de situaciones, “son las cosas que creemos las que determinan las cosas que hacemos” (Madewell y Shaughnessy, 2003, p. 382). Por ello, las perspectivas que permiten a los estudiantes conceptualizar las variables anteriores de una determinada manera se convierten en un punto de partida necesario para la formación de estos futuros docentes. Además, puede afirmarse que “educación” y “confianza” se alimentan mutuamente. La educación es una condición previa fundamental para el desarrollo individual de la confianza personal y social y, a su vez, la confianza es un fundamento esencial de la educación, del aprendizaje y de los logros que se obtienen (Bormann et al., 2021). Finalmente, desde una óptica comunitaria, no cabe duda de que maestros y profesores con confianza generalizada entre las personas y en las instituciones, incluida la escolar, son una inversión de futuro para la cohesión social.

La *muestra*, no probabilística por conveniencia, está compuesta por 528 estudiantes universitarios de Educación Infantil, Educación Primaria, Pedagogía y Educación Social, de 1º a último curso de carrera, con una media de edad de 20,5 años, pertenecientes a Escuni, Centro Universitario de Educación de titularidad católica. Del total de la muestra, 207 estudiantes (39,2%) estudian un doble grado combinando dos titulaciones. El 74,4% son mujeres. Un 42% había estudiado previamente en colegios concertados religiosos católicos, un 43% en centros públicos y un 15% en escuelas privadas.

Para la construcción del *cuestionario* se llevó a cabo un sondeo previo con preguntas de respuesta abierta a un grupo de 74 estudiantes del área de Educación sobre su conceptualización de la confianza y sus experiencias de confianza-desconfianza con las personas en general y con el profesorado en particular. El instrumento de medida final constaba de 60 preguntas tipo Likert más tres cuestiones abiertas. De él forma parte la Escala de Autoestima de Rosenberg (1965), que arroja una solución de dos factores con un 64,17% de varianza total explicada y un Alfa de Cronbach de 0,87. González-Rivera y Pagán-Torres (2017) y Rojas-Barahona et al. (2009) obtienen también una estructura bifactorial e índices de consistencia interna de 0,82 y 0,754 respectivamente. Con el fin de poder utilizar una puntuación unificada de la autoestima, se han reconvertido los ítems inversos en directos.

Dentro de la encuesta, se ha empleado además el Cuestionario de 9 ítems sobre Autoeficacia académica general de Torre-Puente (2006), con un Alfa de Cronbach de 0.95 y una estructura unidimensional en esta muestra con un 73,31% de varianza total explicada. Estos datos son

congruentes con los obtenidos en el proceso de construcción y validación de este conjunto de ítems ( $n=1.179$  estudiantes universitarios,  $\text{Alfa}=0.903$ ) y con los ofrecidos por Muñoz-San Roque et al. (2012). Para la realización de ciertos análisis, se han agrupado bajo la etiqueta *confianza personal* las puntuaciones correspondientes a las subescalas de autoestima y de autoeficacia. Esta confianza personal vendría definida por el grado en el que uno se aprecia a sí mismo y por la creencia de que se es capaz de realizar las acciones que se requieren para producir determinadas consecuciones (Bandura, 1997, p. 3).

Las respuestas a las preguntas abiertas, que proporcionan la información de la primera parte de los resultados, han sido analizadas y categorizadas independientemente por los autores de este trabajo quienes, posteriormente, han procedido a clasificar, jerarquizar y conceptualizar las expresiones de los estudiantes mediante un acuerdo inter jueces. La metodología utilizada ha pretendido profundizar en las concepciones de los estudiantes en torno a la confianza desde un punto de vista fenomenográfico, partiendo no de entrevistas realizadas a un grupo reducido de sujetos, sino del análisis de todas las expresiones escritas de los sujetos de la muestra. Se detalla a continuación el procedimiento seguido en sucesivas fases. En primer lugar, se agruparon las respuestas a las tres preguntas (*conceptualización de la confianza, caracterización de un profesor digno de confianza y razones para la pérdida de la confianza*) en tres documentos distintos para ser leídos independientemente. Tras la lectura individual de los resultados en cada pregunta, se agruparon las contestaciones con identidad semántica en bloques diferenciados de contenido y se etiquetaron inicialmente con conceptos de forma tentativa. En segundo lugar, se pusieron en común las diversas denominaciones conceptuales con el fin de detectar el sentido esencial y global de las respuestas más allá de las variaciones expresivas. Así, por ejemplo, en la pregunta sobre cómo se concibe la confianza, las categorías preliminares acordadas fueron “depósito de fe y riesgo en confiar” (que luego se convirtió en “transferencia de fe arriesgada”), “comunicación/expresión”, “apoyo”, “no fallar, no traicionar”, “requisito/fundamento” y “creer en uno mismo”. Finalmente, se contabilizaron las frecuencias de las apariciones en cada categoría y se localizaron algunos *verbatim* interesantes para ilustrar los conceptos. En el apartado de resultados se hará referencia solamente a lo que aparece como más nuclear.

Los análisis estadísticos utilizados para los datos empíricos han sido: ANOVA de un factor, Pruebas U de Mann-Whitney y de Kruskal-Wallis para muestras independientes, Chi cuadrado,  $r$  de Pearson y rho de Spearman.

## **Resultados**

### *Conceptualización de la confianza, caracterización del docente de confianza y razones para la pérdida de la confianza*

Los resultados cualitativos que se desprenden de las preguntas abiertas permiten identificar cómo estos estudiantes conciben la confianza (434 respuestas), caracterizar a los profesores en quienes

se puede confiar (443 respuestas) y descubrir cuáles son los motivos por los que se deja de confiar en las personas en general (437 respuestas). Analicemos sucesivamente estos tres aspectos.

*Conceptualización de la confianza.* Un 15% piensa en forma autorreferencial y asocia la confianza a creer en uno mismo, pero la mayoría de las contestaciones (80%) se refieren al hecho de confiar en los demás. Nótese que los porcentajes no suman 100 porque ha habido expresiones de la encuesta que se han desestimado por no pertenecer a las categorías principales o por su irrelevancia para este estudio. Un número reducido de respuestas de esta vertiente “social” sostiene que la confianza es la base de las relaciones interpersonales (4%) y que tiene que ver con la ausencia de traición y fallo por parte de los demás (6%) (“que no me fallen ni me traicionen”). Para el 13% de los estudiantes, significa contar con alguien para hablar de sus problemas y sentirse apoyado siempre. Pero más del 50% subraya que confiar se corresponde con una comunicación total en libertad con el otro (27%) y que representa lo que denominamos “una transferencia arriesgada de fe” (30%). Estos dos últimos aspectos resultan esenciales. Confiar es poder expresarse libremente sin miedo a ser juzgado y con la certeza de ser escuchado y aconsejado, sin riesgo de que la información sea compartida con los demás. Depositar en otra persona algo muy valioso sobre uno significa ponerse en sus manos y darle el poder de causarte un gran daño. Sin embargo, se puede hacer con confianza, sabiendo que nunca la traicionará. Los estudiantes de esta muestra son conscientes de que *confiar es un acto de fe en otra persona que implica un alto nivel de certidumbre a la vez que un alto nivel de riesgo.*

*Caracterización del docente en quien se puede confiar.* Los rasgos que más se mencionan son cercanía (50%), apoyo y ayuda (26%), amabilidad y cordialidad (25%), escucha activa sin juzgar (15%), interés y preocupación por el estudiante (13%) y comprensión y empatía (11%). Aunque algunas de estas características pueden solaparse parcialmente entre sí, el conjunto denota que el docente digno de confianza se desempeña con un *buen trato personal* y con una *eficaz comunicación interpersonal*. Cuando se agrupan las opiniones por categorías se destacan cuatro aspectos principales: su autoridad intelectual, su conocimiento y su cultura; su profesionalidad, su entusiasmo y pasión por la educación; el trato del estudiante como persona y no sólo en función de su rol en clase (“no te ve como un alumno, sino como un igual”) y, finalmente, la *buena interacción paradójica*. Aclaremos por qué lo denominamos así. Estos profesores de confianza parecen conjugar armoniosamente comportamientos que no siempre se dan juntos: son cercanos, pero a la vez exigentes; su calidad profesional no está reñida con su humanidad; son amables pero, al mismo tiempo, referentes; crean un clima agradable, pero hay límites y orden en la clase... El componente de profesionalidad “didáctica” y de profesionalidad “relacional” están mutuamente imbricados, pero resalta como más importante el segundo elemento, que contribuye en mayor medida a que se pueda confiar en el profesorado. La manera de enseñar construye la confianza, pues, como dice uno de los estudiantes, “su forma de dar las clases dice mucho de cómo son ellos en realidad”. Por último, un 4% (18 personas de 443) manifiestan no haber tenido en su escolaridad de un docente de quien poder fiarse.



*¿Por qué se pierde la confianza en las personas y, por ende, en el profesorado?* Aquí las respuestas pueden agruparse en cinco grandes categorías. Un 12% de las expresiones se refieren a *minusvaloración y falta de apoyo*: “me hizo sentir de menos”, “no me valoraba” o “no estuvo cuando lo necesitaba” y “me dio la espalda” reflejan este sentimiento de inferioridad y de no sentirse ayudado en los momentos que se requería. En segundo lugar, con un porcentaje similar, aparece el hecho de desvelar las cosas personales compartidas previamente, algo que puede etiquetarse como la *transitividad de lo íntimo*. Tener conciencia de que se comparte con otros lo comunicado en la intimidad personal y que no se respeta el secreto es un poderoso impulsor de la pérdida de la confianza. Asociado a ello resaltan también como elementos importantes la *quiebra de las expectativas iniciales* (“no era como esperaba”), el no cumplimiento de las promesas (“hizo lo que prometió que no haría”) y el descubrimiento del verdadero ser de la otra persona (“ver cómo era realmente”). En cuarto lugar, con un porcentaje elevado de apariciones (32%) y con un alto nivel de generalidad, destacan los conceptos de *mentira, traición, fallo y engaño* como causas del detrimento de la confianza. En quinto lugar, centrado en la relación de pareja, con escasa relevancia porcentual pero con importancia por su contenido, se menciona *la infidelidad, la deslealtad y el abuso sexual*, en este caso, en una ocasión. Dejar de confiar en alguien tiene, evidentemente, sus *efectos*, entre los que se mencionan el daño causado (“me han herido”), la rotura personal (“me ha roto”), las lesiones y el trauma, la decepción y el desánimo.

#### *Confianza en instituciones, en profesionales, en el futuro, en la sociedad y en la educación*

En una escala de 0 a 5, las instituciones mejor valoradas son el sistema sanitario español (Media=3,48), las fuerzas armadas (3,33), las ONG (2,84) y el sistema educativo español (2,79), mientras que aparecen en los últimos lugares la iglesia católica (2,07), los sindicatos (2), las congregaciones religiosas (1,91) y el gobierno español (1,57). Un 61% expresan poca o muy poca confianza en la iglesia católica y un 66% lo hacen en igual medida con respecto a las congregaciones religiosas.

Los profesionales con una media más alta son los bomberos (4,19), los médicos (4,09), los psicólogos (3,87) y los profesores (3,7), situándose en los últimos tres puestos los miembros de comunidades religiosas (2,07), los *influencers* (1,72) y los políticos (1,16). Un 88% de estudiantes confía bastante o mucho en los profesores y a un 65% les inspiran poca o ninguna confianza los religiosos.

La confianza en el “cambio social” se puede apreciar en los cuatro ítems siguientes. *La educación puede cambiar el mundo* es algo que creen el 86,5% de la muestra con una media de 4,47 en una escala de 0 a 5. Las creencias de que *seremos capaces de lograr una sociedad más justa y solidaria y de que las guerras actuales van acabar* se sitúan en un grado intermedio de acuerdo, con medias de 3 y 2,71 respectivamente. Y se muestran bastante en desacuerdo con que *la pobreza en el mundo no tiene solución* (50%, media de 1,62). Por otro lado, en lo que concierne a la confianza en su futuro, un 65% están convencidos (bastante o totalmente de acuerdo) de que *van a encontrar*

su sitio en el mundo (media de 3,78) y un 69% creen que *se están formando bien para el futuro* (3,91). Finalmente, cuando se les pregunta por la determinación hereditaria del rendimiento de los estudiantes, creen claramente que *las notas no dependen de la genética con la que hemos nacido* (75% bastante o en total desacuerdo) y tienden también a estar *en contra de que por mucho que estudie y se esfuerce, un estudiante da lo que da* (46%).

*Correlaciones significativas.* Los estudiantes de esta muestra tienen una imagen positiva de sí mismos (74% con autoestima elevada) y se consideran capaces de llevar a cabo tareas académicas con un adecuado nivel de ejecución (82% con una autoeficacia alta). Autoestima y autoeficacia están relacionadas de forma significativa ( $r=,567$ ;  $p< .05$ ), lo cual viene a indicar según el coeficiente de determinación ( $r^2$ ) que existe un 32% de variabilidad común entre ambos constructos. Fruto de la suma de las puntuaciones en autoestima y en autoeficacia se obtiene una nueva variable que denominamos *confianza personal* que correlaciona significativamente con *confianza en el futuro* ( $r=,466$ ;  $p>,05$ ) y con *satisfacción general* con la universidad ( $r=.415$ ;  $p>,05$ ), que acumula un 80% de estudiantes bastante o muy satisfechos. Por otro lado, confianza personal y satisfacción general correlacionan también significativamente ( $r=,467$ ;  $p<,05$ ).

*Diferencias significativas.* Se ha encontrado una autoestima más elevada en los chicos que en las chicas (prueba U de Mann-Whitney,  $p>,0001$ ) y también más alta en los estudiantes procedentes de colegios públicos en Infantil y Primaria por un lado y de Secundaria y Bachillerato por otro (prueba de Kruskal-Wallis,  $p<,026$  y  $p<,017$  respectivamente), frente a los colegios concertados. Los chicos también se muestran más confiados en el futuro que las chicas (prueba U de Mann-Whitney,  $p>,0011$ ). La autoeficacia académica para el aprendizaje universitario aumenta de forma significativa y progresiva a lo largo de los cursos de escolaridad, dándose la más puntuación más alta en el último curso (prueba de Kruskal-Wallis,  $p<,002$ ). Lo mismo ocurre con el índice global de confianza en uno mismo (autoestima más autoeficacia), con una  $p<0,011$ . Finalmente, los estudiantes de menos edad y de los dos primeros cursos de carrera expresan una mayor satisfacción con la universidad (prueba U de Mann-Whitney,  $p>,0001$  en ambos casos).

## Discusión

Los estudiantes de Educación de esta muestra, futuros profesores en breve, consideran que la confianza puede desglosarse en la que se tiene en uno mismo intrapersonalmente (creer en sí y sentirse capaz) y la que se puede depositar en los demás interpersonalmente. *Conciben la confianza como el fundamento de las relaciones humanas* y la hacen equivalente a poder expresar con libertad todo lo que uno es en lo más profundo de su ser sin miedo a ser juzgado y con la certeza de que el otro te escuchará, te aconsejará y no lo contará a una tercera persona. Baeza-Correa et al. (2014) investigan la construcción y deconstrucción de la confianza en jóvenes chilenos utilizando para ello 21 *focus group*. Estos jóvenes creen que confiar “es el logro de una seguridad respecto de otros, que uno puede contar sus intimidades y no ser traicionado”, algo que “se asocia

a poder creer en uno mismo, en otro y en una institución” y a “la posibilidad de ser (cuando se logra) uno mismo frente a los demás” (p. 177). Entre las razones para perder la confianza en los demás, los estudiantes de nuestro estudio mencionan la transitividad de lo íntimo (contar cosas a terceros), la minusvaloración, la falta de apoyo, el incumplimiento de las promesas y la traición. Baeza- Correa et al. (2014, pp. 178-179) sostienen que la traición y la mentira son las principales razones por las que se llega a desconfiar de una persona, aunque también influyen los cambios de los individuos, el hecho de no compartir las cosas cotidianamente y tomar conciencia de que uno es utilizado. Por otra parte, una encuesta de la Fundación BBVA (2022, p. 14), hecha con una muestra de 4.000 casos, encuentra que los atributos de la confianza son decir la verdad, cumplir las promesas, actuar de manera ética, ser generoso y ser competente o preparado. Se trata claramente del reverso positivo de aquello que contribuye a la pérdida de la confianza.

Observamos una cierta *coincidencia entre los atributos de los profesores considerados como eficaces o excelentes y aquellos señalados en quienes se puede confiar*. Morales-Vallejo (2010, pp. 91-150) plantea que las características del buen profesor pueden ser variadas y distintas entre docentes, es decir, que no hay un único perfil del “buen docente”, pero que básicamente se podrían reducir a dos categorías: los rasgos que tienen que ver con la vertiente didáctica (saber y saber enseñar) y las referidas a la relación interpersonal (saber relacionarse). En una dirección similar se manifiestan Young y Shaw (1999), Gros y Romañá (2004) y Muñoz-San Roque (2010). En nuestro estudio, el docente en quien se puede confiar muestra algunas semejanzas con las manifestadas en estas investigaciones: es una persona que es percibido con autoridad intelectual, que tiene un elevado compromiso con la educación y una excelente relación y comunicación personal con los estudiantes, siendo esta última dimensión muy importante. Cabe hipotetizar que la valía profesional y la categoría personal atesoradas por algunos profesores se realimentan mutuamente, pero que a la hora de confiar en ellos pesa mucho su ser personal.

Las *instituciones* en las que más confían estos estudiantes de Educación son el sistema sanitario, las fuerzas armadas, las ONG y el sistema educativo. Y confían poco o muy poco en la iglesia católica, los sindicatos y el gobierno, por este orden decreciente. Estos resultados concuerdan en alto grado con los hallazgos de la Fundación BBVA (2022, p. 35) en una muestra española, que sitúan en la zona alta de las instituciones a la sanidad pública, la Cruz Roja, la Organización Mundial de la Salud, la policía y el ejército; y en la parte baja, al parlamento, la iglesia católica, el gobierno nacional, los sindicatos, las redes sociales, los bancos y los partidos políticos. Sin embargo, difieren en alguna medida con los datos obtenidos en el estudio mundial sobre las culturas de los jóvenes en las universidades católicas, dirigido por Thivierge (2014, p. 124) y llevado a cabo con una muestra de más de 16.000 estudiantes universitarios de todos los continentes en 17 idiomas. En un rango de 1 a 6, aparecen en los primeros lugares las instituciones educativas (4,1), las ONG (3,7), la institución religiosa (3,7), los bancos (3,6) y los tribunales de justicia (3,6), mientras que obtienen las medias más bajas la policía (2,8) la administración pública

(2,7), el gobierno (2,2) y los políticos (1,9). Esta diferencia podría deberse a la heterogeneidad de la composición de esta muestra, que se aprecia parcialmente en la media de las desviaciones típicas en estas preguntas (1,36). Por último, la Comisión Europea, en el Eurobarómetro del verano de 2022 (p. 2), muestra que sólo un 23% de españoles confía en su gobierno (frente a la media europea de un 34%) y sólo un 20% lo hace en su parlamento (frente a un 34% de media en Europa). En este caso, nuestros estudiantes de Educación sí están alineados en el mismo sentido.

Se ha analizado también el grado de confianza en distintos grupos de profesionales. En nuestra encuesta, bomberos, médicos, psicólogos, profesores y policías alcanzan las posiciones mejor valoradas, mientras que religiosos, *influencers* y políticos se sitúan en la cola de las elecciones. Algo así sucede en el estudio de la Fundación BBVA (2022, pp. 37-44). Aquí resultan muy confiables los científicos (8,4 sobre 10), los médicos (8,3), los maestros (7,9), los policías (6,9) y los militares (6,4), mientras que no superan el 4 sobre 10 los sindicalistas (3,8), los sacerdotes (3,7), los políticos (2,9) y los *influencers* o *youtubers* (2,4). Un 90% dicen tener mucha o bastante confianza en los profesores y un 54% desconfían bastante o mucho de los sacerdotes. Un rango de profesiones y unos porcentajes casi idénticos a los nuestros si exceptuamos los grupos profesionales no preguntadas en ambas investigaciones.

En general, estos futuros profesores, estudiantes de Educación, tienen un alto aprecio de sí mismos y creen en sus capacidades para sacar adelante sus compromisos universitarios, es decir, tienen una elevada confianza personal. A la vez, se manifiestan bastante o muy satisfechos con su experiencia universitaria y se muestran con fe en el futuro, pues creen que se están formando adecuadamente y que encontrarán su espacio en la sociedad. Estas creencias no se distribuyen por igual en función del curso en el que están, del sexo y del tipo de centro de procedencia. La autoestima es más baja en las chicas, la autoeficacia es más elevada en el último curso, el índice global de confianza se incrementa a lo largo de la carrera y es superior en quienes provienen de las escuelas públicas, mientras que los de más edad tienen menor confianza en el futuro y menor satisfacción con la universidad. La inferior autoestima en las chicas es un dato coincidente con otras investigaciones, como la de Thivierge (2014, p. 119) y la de la Organización Mundial de la Salud, en donde las chicas se muestran más insatisfechas con la vida y manifiestan un menor bienestar físico y psicológico que los chicos (WHO, 2016, pp. 72-82).

El perfil que arrojan los resultados de las creencias sobre el futuro, la sociedad y la educación podría caracterizarse inicialmente de esperanzador. Les parece que la educación puede cambiar el mundo y que se puede llegar a conseguir una sociedad más justa y solidaria en la que haya menos guerras, pues éstas pueden terminarse. A la vez, presentan un pensamiento contrario al determinismo social o genético ciego, pues no están de acuerdo con que el rendimiento dependa de la genética con la que hemos nacido ni tampoco con que los estudiantes no pueden dar más de lo que son capaces de dar por mucho que se esfuercen. Habría que contrastar adelante si esta

percepción de las fuerzas de la educación se mantiene o cambia en función de la experiencia de estos estudiantes, habida cuenta de que los de más edad tienen menos confianza en el futuro y también se encuentran menos satisfechos con la universidad.

La confianza en la docencia actúa como un eje que sostiene y dinamiza las interacciones educativas, consolidándose como un aspecto fundamental que transforma las relaciones en el aula. No se trata únicamente de un concepto teórico, sino de una práctica observable que se manifiesta a través de actitudes y comportamientos del docente. Su impacto se percibe tanto en la manera en que los estudiantes se involucran en el aprendizaje como en cómo estos desarrollan su percepción de sí mismos y del sistema educativo.

En síntesis, la confianza docente no es un fin en sí mismo, sino un medio poderoso para construir comunidades educativas donde el aprendizaje es significativo, los estudiantes se sienten valorados y el sistema educativo es percibido como un agente de cambio positivo. Es en la interacción constante entre estos elementos donde la confianza se convierte en el motor de un aprendizaje transformador.

### **Conclusiones**

Las buenas relaciones interpersonales en general y las que se producen en concreto en el ámbito escolar están determinadas en un alto grado por la confianza que los interlocutores depositan entre sí. Lo mismo sucede en la interacción entre personas e instituciones o entre entidades. El análisis de este permanente intercambio interactivo puede limitarse al momento y circunstancias en que se produce, pero su comprensión más cabal trasciende el mero acto comunicativo puntual y requiere alzar la mirada al tiempo pasado por un lado y al contexto presente por otro. La confianza manifestada en la diaria interacción personal se ha ido construyendo en el tiempo tras la comprobación de que la persona en quien se confía es como decía ser, se comporta de manera fiable en el tiempo y responde a lo que se esperaba de ella de acuerdo con el depósito inicial que se le había entregado. Esta coherencia transtemporal debe complementarse con la congruencia transituacional percibida, es decir, la constancia de que el otro se mantiene confiable en contextos diferentes en los que puede jugar diferentes roles, por ejemplo, como padre en la casa, como hijo en la familia de procedencia o como padre de estudiante en el colegio. Sin embargo, frente a esta generalidad necesaria en el tiempo y en el espacio para la génesis de la confianza, la pérdida de la fe en los demás o en las instituciones puede darse de una manera inmediata tras la percepción de que el otro no ha cumplido con las expectativas, ha traicionado las comunicaciones mantenidas con él o no ha prestado la atención y el cuidado necesarios en un momento determinado. La confianza en las personas y en las instituciones tarda en edificarse y puede quebrarse de forma repentina con una cierta facilidad. Los futuros profesores participantes en esta investigación son muy conscientes de las condiciones en las que se genera y se pierde la confianza, de que fiarse de otros es imprescindible para poder desarrollarse como personas y de que, simultáneamente, el

hecho de hacerlo implica un alto riesgo personal. Cabría esperar que estas convicciones fueran utilizadas no sólo en su vida personal sino también en su actuación como docentes en el futuro. Esta posible transferencia beneficiaría mucho a sus alumnos.

Resulta interesante la alta valoración que se muestra, por un lado, de las instituciones como el sistema sanitario, las fuerzas armadas, las ONG y el sistema educativo español; y por otro, en los bomberos, los médicos, los psicólogos, los profesores y los policías. Estas entidades y estos profesionales son percibidos como muy confiables. Podría establecerse como factor común a ambas realidades el hecho de que *tanto los organismos como las personas mejor evaluados se dedican al cuidado de los demás*, sea en el ámbito de la salud, el de la seguridad, el social o el educativo. Por otra parte, en el estudio llevado a cabo por la Fundación BBVA (2022) se observa que hay una “correspondencia entre la confianza en los grupos profesionales y la confianza en las instituciones en las que desarrollan su actividad. Por lo general, los profesionales son mejor valorados que la correspondiente institución”. Las dos facetas que generan mayor confianza en los grupos profesionales son la ética y la competencia o capacidad (p. 44). Estas dos cualidades sugieren bien a las claras que los profesionales en quienes más se confía se comportan conforme a criterios éticos de bondad y honestidad a la vez que son percibidos como muy capaces y bien preparados en su trabajo. Los trabajadores de un sistema o de una organización son una parte muy importante de la entidad de la que forman parte, pero en el sistema hay también otros elementos personales, materiales y organizativos que trascienden el núcleo esencial de los profesionales especializados que lo caracterizan en mayor medida. El subconjunto de los médicos configura en gran medida lo que se opina del sistema sanitario, pero no determina totalmente la percepción que se tiene del sistema. Se da un cierto trasvase y generalización de percepciones de confianza, por proximidad temática, entre lo que se piensa sobre los profesionales prototipo y la institución de la que forman parte. En el ámbito de la educación, quizá la confianza que genere el profesorado en su conjunto esté tiñendo la confianza que se otorga al sistema educativo. Si esto ocurre en las demás entes analizados (gobierno, iglesia católica, fuerzas armadas, mundo empresarial...), podríamos suponer que la confianza depositada en las “personas” referentes de cada agrupación está aportando el mayor porcentaje de la varianza de la confianza depositada en las instituciones y, por ende, en la sociedad. Y lo que sucede en positivo con la confiabilidad otorgada pasa también con la desconfianza: la pérdida de credibilidad en un miembro principal de un grupo o en muchos de ellos, con independencia de su relevancia, provoca sin duda una quiebra de la confianza generalizada en la institución difícil de remediar a corto plazo. De ahí la necesidad de un comportamiento ético y con competencia profesional continuado en las personas de cada organización o entidad.

La anterior conclusión lleva a centrar nuestra atención en la figura profesional del docente. Los resultados de esta investigación caracterizaban al profesor en quien se podía confiar de la siguiente manera: alguien con un alto nivel de competencia académica (cultura, conocimientos,

autoridad académica y pasión por su trabajo) y alguien con competencia relacional (buena interacción, atención personal, empatía y buen trato). Estos atributos y categorías se asemejan mucho a aquellos que ostentan los llamados “buenos profesores” o “docentes eficaces”. En ambos casos, confianza y buen docente, lo que subyace es la ejemplaridad y la cuestión de los modelos de identificación. Morales-Vallejo (2009) sostiene que, para poder tener un cierto impacto en los alumnos, “la primera condición es ser percibidos como buenos profesores (...). Además el profesor debe ser querido por sus alumnos (...); digamos al menos que el profesor debe ser *cordialmente aceptado*, o *no rechazado emocionalmente* por sus alumnos” (p. 111). Nótese el énfasis en la percepción que determina la evaluación o no de la bondad del profesorado: lo importante es cómo perciben al docente y no tanto cómo sea él “en sí mismo”, aunque resultará muy difícil ser percibido como bueno sin serlo. Las creencias y las percepciones motivan las acciones. Los estudiantes siempre evalúan a sus docentes, es cuestión de éstos si desean enterarse o no de lo que piensan y tener en cuenta sus valoraciones. Esta valoración está hecha en función de cómo perciben lo que hace, lo que dice, lo que piensa, lo que siente el docente y cómo les trata. Estos pensamientos, sentimientos y acciones del profesor hacen sentirse de una determinada manera a los estudiantes quienes, a su vez, reaccionan de diversos modos. Este ciclo es, sin duda, recíproco y podría empezar también en los alumnos, pero corresponde principalmente al docente la responsabilidad de la gestión de los procesos de enseñanza y aprendizaje. Cómo sean percibidas su manera de ser y de actuar le hacen más o menos confiable a los ojos de los alumnos. Y la confiabilidad depende en gran medida de lo que ocurra en las clases y en el desarrollo de los estudiantes. Por ejemplo, Bankole (2011) pone en relación la confianza en los profesores con la identificación con la escuela, con la percepción del énfasis académico que subyace en la institución escolar y con el rendimiento obtenido. Ryan et al. (1994) sostienen que los estudiantes desarrollan una mayor motivación intrínseca cuando perciben que sus profesores son honestos y se manifiestan cuidadosos con ellos. Para Scales et al. (2020), los buenos profesores expresan cuidado, se comprometen con el crecimiento, proporcionan apoyo, comparten el poder y amplían las posibilidades de sus alumnos. Y, para no alargar la lista, Stroet et al. (2013) creen que la implicación y el compromiso del docente se distingue por cuatro componentes: expresan su compromiso mostrando afecto y cariño; muestran su sintonía comprendiendo al estudiante; les dedican recursos como el tiempo empleado con ellos, y se aseguran de que son confiables y que están disponibles para ofrecer esa ayuda. En definitiva, parafraseando a Morales-Vallejo (1995), *el mensajero es el mensaje*: la confianza depende de cómo son los profesores, algo que se transmite “por su forma de dar las clases”, como decía una alumna de este estudio. *Cómo sea* el alto representante de la educación más cercano para millones de alumnos resulta determinante para que los estudiantes confíen en sí mismos, en la educación y en la sociedad.

Estos jóvenes manifiestan un adecuado nivel de autoestima y una autoeficacia elevada, lo cual habla de la consideración positiva que tienen en general de sí mismos y de lo capaces que se sienten para desarrollar sus compromisos académicos universitarios. Quiere esto decir que se sienten bastante

seguros de sí mismos y que mayoritariamente confían en sus fuerzas. A la vez, muchos de ellos se encuentran bastante o muy satisfechos con su experiencia universitaria, considerando que el profesorado se preocupa por los estudiantes, que lo que aprenden les resulta valioso, que sienten que forman parte de la institución universitaria en la que están y que hay orden y seriedad con respecto al aprendizaje. Además, tienen fe en el futuro tanto desde una óptica individual (creo que me irá bien) como desde una perspectiva educativo-social (la educación puede contribuir al cambio). Cabe pensar que esta triple caracterización positiva de esta muestra (confianza personal, confianza en el futuro y satisfacción global universitaria) puede ser colindante con un cierto conformismo en el alumnado que les acomode en un bienestar individual poco generador de motivaciones. Si fuera así, corresponde a la universidad y al profesorado espolear las creencias acomodaticias y despertar el pensamiento autocrítico y crítico. Pero cabe también pensar en el poder generativo y motivador que subyace a sentirse a gusto consigo mismo, a creer en las propias fuerzas y a pensar que los educadores tienen una palabra que decir y una obra que hacer para que esta sociedad sea más justa, más tolerante, más sabia y más cooperadora. Decía Cervantes *que la sangre se hereda y la virtud se aquista, y la virtud vale por sí sola lo que la sangre no vale* (Don Quijote de la Mancha, XLII, 2ª parte). Ojalá los jóvenes aprendices de profesores conquisten la virtud (el valor) de la confianza en ellos mismos y en los demás porque han tenido profesores universitarios virtuosos, confiables y honestos. Porque la confianza no se hereda.

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